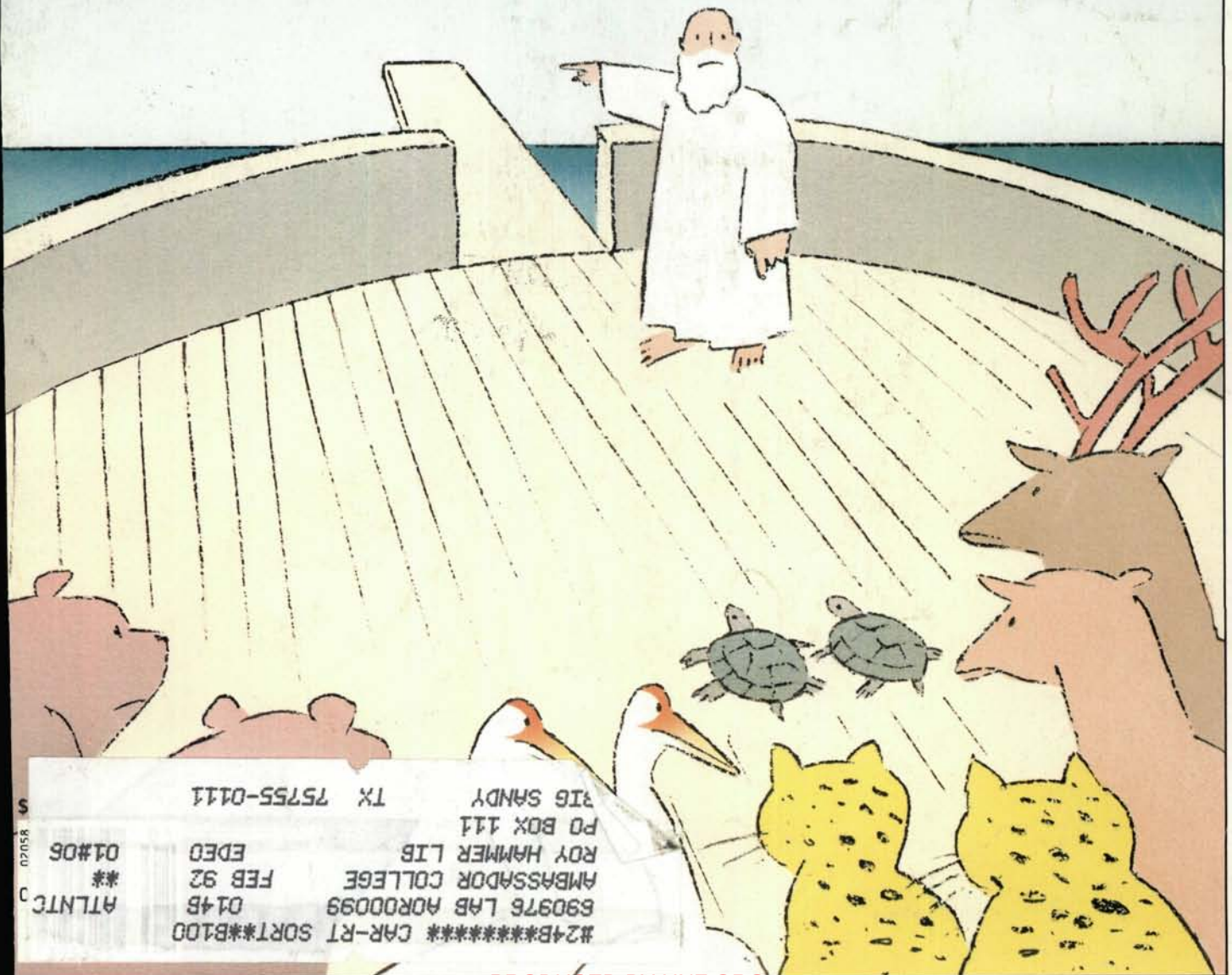


The Atlantic

WITOLD RYBCZYNSKI ON SUBURBAN DESIGN / FICTION BY TIM O'BRIEN

PLAYING GOD

*Why we shouldn't try to save every
endangered species*



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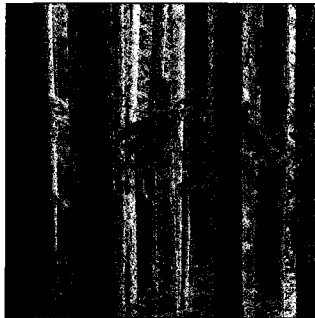
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A common thread running through the financial scandals of the past decade has been the failure of the major U.S. accounting firms, for reasons often unsavory, to conduct proper audits of the nation's banks, savings-and-loan associations, insurance companies, and industrial corporations.

by WILLIAM STERNBERG

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Grounded in the "Noah Principle"—the view, shared by many conservationists, that all species have a right to exist—the Endangered Species Act insists that we attempt to save every threatened species. This inflexibility, the authors say, has now become economically untenable.

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745 BOYLSTON STREET

PHILOSOPHERS AND THEOLOGIANs have debated the link between humanity and nature for centuries, but only in recent years has the discussion become the stuff of television news stories and shoptalk at city hall. One reason is the widely advanced claim that human beings may soon wipe out many of the other species on earth. The prospect of what scientists call an extinction spasm elicits alarm, and most Americans find it easy to decry the despoliation of rain forests and arctic tundras which will make that happen. Things seem different when the problem appears on our own property, where the spotted owl flies. We are learning that fully restoring the nation's biological heritage is next to impossible, and that even a partial job will be expensive—so expensive that it will come at the price of other dreams.

This spring Congress will begin debate on the reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act, this country's attempt to hold back the tide of extinction. It will be an all-out political fight—perhaps too hot for legislators to settle in this election year. But the questions will not go away, because argument over the shape and the function of the Endangered Species Act implicitly strays into confounding moral territory. Today humanity dominates the earth, but what responsibilities does dominance imply? Do all nonhuman species have, as many conservationists say, a right to

exist? How best can we act as stewards of nature? On what criteria should such a judgment be based? How much is a species worth? What is lost when it vanishes? And what is gained when we prevent it from vanishing?

For more than a century *The Atlantic Monthly* has been a venue for passionate argument about the spiritual and moral value of conservation. In this tradition we present in this issue three articles that question easy assumptions, however well intentioned. Charles C. Mann and Mark L. Plummer argue that we are continually and inescapably deciding which species shall live and die, but that the choices are being made irrationally and destructively, because we shrink from the thought of playing God. Saving beautiful but almost vanished species like the California condor and the whooping crane—"the walking wounded of the animal world"—is unwise, says Suzanne Winckler, because such efforts gobble up already strained resources at the expense of less glamorous (but often biologically far more significant) species. And Thomas Palmer points out that the appearance of *Homo sapiens*—or, more exactly, of the conscious mind—was the epochal event in the evolutionary process. We should stop professing shock that, like other turning points in the history of life, it has had destructive effects on the rest of the natural world.

—THE EDITORS

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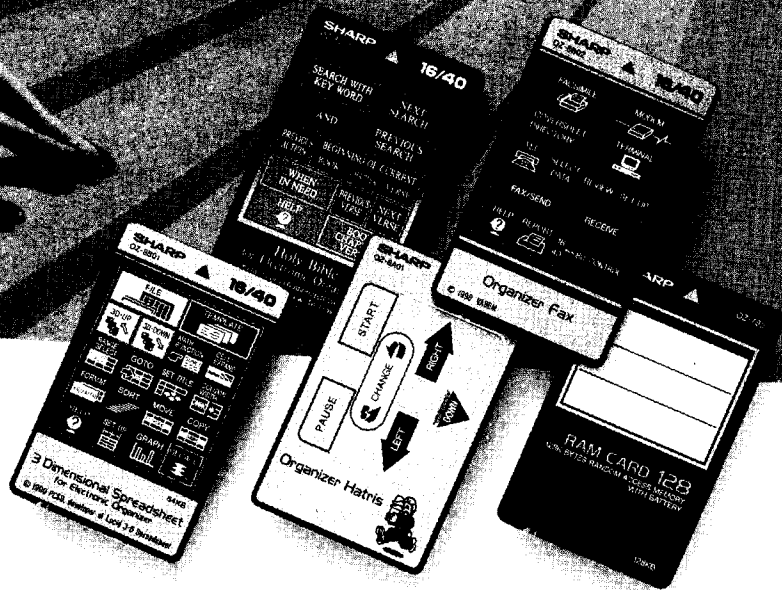
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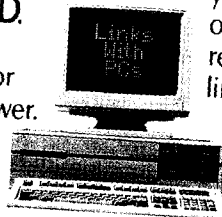
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



LOOKING FOR SHAKESPEARE

In making his excellent case for Oxford ("Looking for Shakespeare," October *Atlantic*), Tom Bethell unfortunately was not aware of several recent discoveries by members of the Shakespeare Oxford Society.

One of the most significant findings concerns the dating of *The Tempest*, which Stratfordians assign to 1611, seven years after the death of Oxford. The year 1611 was selected because it has been believed that the play was based on an account of a 1609 shipwreck at Bermuda which was published in 1610. The sole connection to Bermuda in the play is in the line "From the still-vexed Bermoothes, there she's hid." The word "Bermoothes" has been taken to mean "Bermuda." Many versions of the play have made the substitution without benefit of a footnote.

The Oxfordian Richard Paul Roe recently discovered that Bermoothes was a London district contiguous to Drury Lane, which served as a refuge for debtors, miscreants, and felons, because there they were privileged against arrest. (See *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, Macmillan, 1976.)

So much for the need to date *The Tempest* after Oxford's death. There were plenty of shipwrecks during his lifetime which could have been the basis for the play.

As the evidence continues to accumulate, knowledgeable Stratfordians await the moment of truth with apprehension, Oxfordians with anticipation.

RICHARD W. EDBLOM
Minneapolis, Minn.

"There did exist a man William Shakspeare of Stratford," Tom Bethell admits, while denying that he was the poet and playwright William Shakespeare. To Oxfordians the difference in spelling is tremendously significant. But Bethell has overlooked a solid and unshakable piece of evidence that they were one and the same: the

statue in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford, erected late in 1616. The family ordered the stonecutter to carve the name as Shakspeare, seven years before the First Folio (which contains a reference to the statue) was published. Bethell believes that the man from Stratford was an illiterate "factotum," yet the statue is holding a pen in his hand, over a sheet of paper. It is the statue of a *writer*.

Oxfordians stress the high nobility and aristocracy of Edward de Vere and underplay (or ignore) the discreditable facts—not only that he was a murderer (so his father-in-law told us), but also that his friend Charles Arundel testified that he was "a shameless liar, an habitual drunkard. . . . I will prove him the buggerer of a boy that is his cook, by his own confession [to Lord Henry Howard] as well as by witnesses [Francis Southwell and William Cornwallis]." It is all on record. Lord Burghley, the father-in-law, earlier (1567) wrote in his diary: "I did my best to have the Jury find the death of a poor man he [Oxford] killed in my house to be *se defendendo* [self-defense]." The poor man—whom Bethell disingenuously calls "possibly another of Burghley's spies"—was Burghley's under cook, Thomas Brinknell, who resisted Oxford's advances and was stabbed to death for his insolence.

Finally, Bethell graciously reports that in 1987, at a moot court to settle the Shakespeare-Oxford question, three Supreme Court justices—Brennan, Blackmun, and Stevens—handed down the verdict for William Shakespeare. Bethell comments, "But Oxford benefited mightily from the exposure." This would be funny if it were not rather pathetic.

ROBERT GIROUX
New York, N.Y.

The Earl of Oxford may have had a more urgent reason than Tom Bethell realizes for posing as "William Shakespeare": the sonnets strongly

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suggest a homosexual affair between the poet and the Earl of Southampton.

No man of modest birth in that age, when sodomy was a capital crime, would have dared make such amorous overtures to a nobleman as "Shakespeare" makes to "the Master-Mistress of my passion" in the sonnets. These cryptic poems are heavy with hints of scandal. They were published in 1609 under mysterious circumstances and quickly vanished, perhaps confiscated; only thirteen copies have survived. The next edition didn't appear until 1640; it changed some pronouns and omitted key poems to make it appear that the poet was making love to his "mistress." Both Oxford and Southampton were accused of homosexuality by enemies. The charges are somewhat dubious, but they may also indicate perceived vulnerabilities.

The name "William Shakespeare" first appears in print in the dedications of *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) to Southampton. It never appears in print as the name of a playwright until 1598. "Shakespeare" may have been created as a persona to disguise Oxford's liaison with Southampton, and affixed to the plays later.

As for William Shakspeare of Stratford, his homely will contains no mention of the earls of Southampton, Pembroke, and Montgomery, whose patronage he'd supposedly enjoyed. Nothing in the Stratford records indicates either Shakespearean urbanity or a disposition to make bold passes at his social superiors.

JOSEPH SOBRAN
Arlington, Va.

Tom Bethell replies:

The statue in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford, is less "solid and unshakable" than Robert Giroux asserts. We certainly don't know that "the family" played any role in its installation. An engraving in Sir William Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, published in 1656, shows "Shakspeare" (the name on the monument's inscription) clutching a distended sack: no quill pen, no sheaf of paper. The figure in the monument seems originally to have been represented as "a dealer in bagged commodities," as Charlton Ogburn has written. There are indications that it was altered in the eighteenth century in such a way as to convert the grain dealer into a writer.

As to the accusations of homosexual-ity leveled by Charles Arundel (himself accused of treason), is Giroux bold enough to assert that they disqualify the Earl of Oxford from further consideration as the poet and playwright? In his own work, *The Book Known as Q* (1982), Giroux devotes several pages to the indications of homosexuality in Shakespeare's sonnets (particularly Sonnet 20). Finally, Giroux's assertion that Thomas Brinknell was stabbed for the "insolence" of resisting "Oxford's advances" is pure invention. Burghley nowhere tells us the motive for the stabbing, nor does anyone else. I don't know why it should be disingenuous to suggest that an employee of Burghley was one of his spies. Are cooks incapable of espionage?

Speaking of the grant of red cloth to the King's Men in 1604, Irvin Matus states that "Ogburn tells us nothing more of what appears in this account than that this grant was made to 'diverse persons,'" though he must have read, four lines down, "'William Shakespeare' heading the list." This is not the first time he has truncated a statement I make in *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality* in order to discredit it. However, lacking space to take Matus up on our multiple differences, I shall let the book speak for the evidence and quote a paragraph to be added to a fourth printing summarizing the facts that in my view dispose of Shakespearean orthodoxy once and for all:

"The Elizabethans cannot have been oblivious to the qualities of the greatest of English writers that led John Dryden to call him 'divine,' Carlyle 'the greatest of intellects' and Heinrich Heine a creator second only to God. The first two publications adorned with the name 'William Shakespeare,' *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, were so popular that one printing after another was called for. Previously, writing of a play unmistakably *Henry the Sixth, Part One*, Thomas Nashe said that it had 'moved to tears . . . ten thousand spectators at least (at several times).' The first known mention of Shakespeare as a playwright declared him the best of the English for both comedy and tragedy and attested that 'The Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine-filed phrase if they would speak English.' The most au-

thoritative voice among his contemporaries proclaimed him the 'Soul of the age! / The applause! delight! the wonder of our stage'. . . Surely other writers, actors, university men, courtiers would have gone out of their way to make the acquaintance of such a man as Shakespeare was. How does it happen, then, that no one we know of reported during the years when he was alive ever to have met, seen or had any communication with a poet or dramatist named William Shakespeare and that the only three who ever wrote of knowing him did so only years after his death: the actors Heminge and Condell were represented in the First Folio of 1623 as calling him 'so worthy a friend & Fellow' without attributing a single personal characteristic to him; and Ben Jonson referred to him in a posthumous publication as 'honest, and of an open and free nature'—all he could find to say to help us picture the immortal Shakespeare, whom he loved 'on this side idolatry.' Can we doubt that the poet-dramatist was known, where known, in a different identity, that the authorship was a dissimulated one and 'William Shakespeare' a subterfuge?"

CHARLTON OGBURN
Beaufort, S.C.

Irvin Matus replies:

It is odd to be accused of truncating the statements of Charlton Ogburn, who so often finds it necessary to truncate documents to fit his views. It is this that is at issue in his rendition of the grant of red cloth to the King's Men. The account book in which this grant is found shows that it was made to Shakespeare and eight of his fellows as "Players" specifically. As Ogburn might phrase it, the suspicion voices itself that this information was omitted because it does not conform to his belief that Shakespeare's "alleged career on the stage is illusory." As for his paragraph intended to "dispose of Shakespearean orthodoxy once and for all": There is no dispute that Shakespeare has come to be recognized as the greatest of modern playwrights. However, but for Meres (who wrote at a time before any playwright other than Shakespeare had developed a substantial body of work), there is no indication that he was so acknowledged in his own lifetime. There is certainly no whisper that his contemporaries suspected that



he was “the greatest of intellects” or “a creator second only to God.” All we hear of him in his own age is that he was a master of the language with a great ability to delight his audiences. At last it should be recognized that the Oxfordian heterodoxy is merely the Shakespearean orthodoxy raised to a higher pitch and social status.

Edward Dolnick’s interesting article on the use of computers for literary analysis (“The Ghost’s Vocabulary,” October *Atlantic*) mentioned a study of the Book of Mormon aimed at determining if it was written by ancient authors or the nineteenth-century Mormon founder Joseph Smith. As Dolnick reported, a team of largely Mormon researchers concluded that patterns of word usage in samples of Smith’s prose differed from those in the Book of Mormon. The conclusions of this study are hailed by Mormons as “evidence” for the antiquity and authenticity of their founding document.

However, *Atlantic* readers should know that there is a much more convincing explanation for word-pattern differences between the Book of Mormon and Smith’s prose: plagiarism of the King James Version. Entire chunks of the KJV Old Testament show up in the Book of Mormon (including eighteen chapters of the Book of Isaiah), and it is liberally peppered with phrases and quotations from the KJV (a study by H. Michael Marquardt lists 200 examples). And this wholesale borrowing is done in a clumsy, anachronistic fashion, with material from the New Testament frequently appearing in portions of the Book of Mormon that are supposed to date from the Old Testament era (for example, 2 Nephi 32:9/Luke 18:1, Mosiah 26:27/Matthew 25:41, and Alma 40:25/Matthew 13:43).

LUKE P. WILSON
Institute for Religious Research
Grand Rapids, Mich.

NATIONAL FORESTS

In building her case for a no-cut policy on our national forests (“The Mismanagement of the National Forests,” October *Atlantic*), Perri Knize ignores some historical, technical, and economic facts:

- Most western national forests were

set aside from the fast-dwindling public domain to provide a perpetual supply of timber products for a growing nation. By law, sustainable timber production is a prime responsibility of the Forest Service. Far from being “land nobody wanted,” the original forest reserves were strongly opposed and reluctantly accepted by turn-of-the-century timber barons.

- Most eastern national forests started as cut-over land bought from tax-strapped private owners. “Forty years of Forest Service mismanagement” (Knize’s opinion) has nurtured a productive second forest in our Wisconsin-Michigan border area, which helps support a strong forest industry and recreational forest use.

- Studies by impartial organizations continue to document increasing timber demand and to forecast greater populations and higher per capita use. Knize’s claim to the contrary (her Myth No. 1) shows a biased disregard for the facts.

- Below-cost timber sales (Myth No. 2) are a result of a Catch 22 set of sale-preparation requirements. The best timber would have difficulty making

a profit when carrying this overkill burden.

- Knize’s answer to her Myth No. 3 calls for timber-dependent communities to convert to tourist-dependent, low-paying service economies. Communities in this region reject this de-meaning attitude; people here want to earn their living producing, from renewable resources, a meaningful product essential to their fellow men.

- A no-cut policy would be one of neglect and waste which would create dangerous fuel conditions similar to those in Yellowstone National Park before the disastrous fires. There is a season for everything in life—including a time for timber harvest and the regeneration of the next forest.

- User fees would be a welcome help to defray what is now totally below-cost forest recreation. However, here in the Lake States, public and most corporate forest lands have traditionally been open to the public. It would be very difficult to make a fee system work after our long history of free use. Knize is making a Trojan-horse proposal; her scheme is no substitute for timber income.

From beginning



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• The best way to save the national forests is to apply an improved and balanced multiple-use management program that maximizes compatible resource uses. This is an unglamorous, old-fashioned approach to the problem, which does not appeal to narrowly focused interest groups. It does, however, focus on the real customers for national-forest resources—all the people of this country who need forest products, wildlife, recreation, scenery, and solitude. With greater maturity, understanding, tolerance, and perseverance, this old-fashioned approach will succeed.

ROBERT LEE
Iron Mountain, Mich.

The statement that national forests “are for the most part thin-soiled . . . lands that produce low-quality timber” is untrue. I have spent a lot of time on both the Eldorado National Forest in California and the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire. Both have thousands of acres of some of the most productive timberland supporting some of the highest-quality timber

I have ever seen. I would expect that this is the case on many other national forests as well. Certainly not all national-forest acreage is suitable or appropriate for timber production, but why not manage some of the areas that are? Remember that a considerable acreage in the entire national-forest system has been set aside as wilderness area, where no timber cutting may take place. The national-park system is off-limits to timber cutting as well. The notion that national-forest timber is low-quality wood sold at bargain prices to a greedy lumber industry in cahoots with the U.S. Forest Service is nonsense. Many Forest Service timber sales involve a competitive bidding process that has historically resulted in some high prices for standing timber, often higher than the prices paid for timber off private land and in some cases higher than the existing market for sawn lumber would justify.

Other points mentioned by the author I would question:

1. While some Forest Service timber may be sold below cost, I believe this claim to be exaggerated. Costs depend

on the methods used to allocate them. Items such as roads, boundary surveys, and resource inventories should not be charged against a single timber sale, because some of the benefits of these costs increase the value of other resources or programs as well. For example, a logging road may service many other timber sales, may be used when timber is harvested again from the same area, may provide access for recreation, and may aid in fire-, insect-, and disease-control efforts.

2. The slash burning in recently harvested areas that the author observed from the air was done to prepare for replanting or reseeded. Views of these same areas later (almost never publicized) will show a healthy young forest becoming established.

3. “The invention of the internal-combustion engine” was hardly a cause for decline in the demand for timber, nor is the use of “electricity and fuel oil . . . for our energy needs.” The logging industry is driven by the demand for wood as a building material and for paper products, not for fuel wood. Furthermore, does the author really think

to end. It's an Accord.



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it's more virtuous to use oil to make electricity or plastic products than to use a renewable resource such as wood?

4. The West Coast logging firms and sawmills that are dependent on Forest Service timber are generally large companies with high capital investments which pay decent wages to a skilled and specialized labor force. To liken them to a "small family mill destined to go the way of the small family farm" is to ignore reality. The people in these timber-dependent communities do not exist in a prosperous economy with multiple options for high-paying employment. Like it or not, timber and the associated support industries are about the only game in town.

PAUL W. BARBOUR
Allard Lumber Co.
Brattleboro, Vt.

I also have traveled to national forests "all over the United States, from the Carolinas to Alaska," and have talked with the same people mentioned by Perri Knize. In addition, I write from the perspective of more than thirty years as a professional forester, having worked more than eight years with the Forest Service as a field and research forester, eighteen years as a professor of forest management (teaching, research, and administration), and five years as a consulting forester. I am currently the deputy assistant secretary of agriculture for natural resources and the environment, with responsibility for overseeing the activities of the Forest Service.

I don't dispute what Knize has observed, nor what she gleaned from her interviews. I've seen and heard much of the same myself. I do, however, dispute her interpretation of what she has seen and heard. She claims mismanagement of the national forests (all 191.4 million acres, I suppose), yet she focuses almost entirely on timber. At most, only 85.2 million acres (about 45 percent) of national-forest area is considered suitable for timber management.

Knize's article makes Forest Service employees out to be uncaring, timber-crazed Neanderthals pursuing destructive policies. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Forest Service does sell timber, which it is explicitly authorized by law to do. But the law also requires comprehensive, interdisciplinary land-management planning and

project-level analysis, including disclosure for public comment, of everything that happens on a national forest.

JOHN H. BEUTER
Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C.

Thank you for the best article on the devastation of our national forests that I have seen in my many years of reading about this issue. It was willing to go the extra mile and call for an end not just to mining old growth in our national forests, or to clear-cutting in our national forests, but to logging in our national forests—period. You have aired a view that even our most ardent local groups here in the Pacific Northwest, where the issue is hottest, have not dared to touch (with the exception of the Native Forest Council, which holds a view similar to Knize's). And yet Knize comes across not as a hot-headed radical but as a frugal economic conservative.

MARY VOGEL
Ancient Forest Hikes
Salem, Oreg.

Perri Knize replies:

It is true, as Robert Lee asserts, that timber harvesting was a founding purpose of the national forests. Does that mean it must remain a current one? Times have changed since the national forests were first set aside as "forest reserves" a hundred years ago, and we have learned a few things since then about forest management and ecosystems. If the "old-fashioned" balanced multiple-use management that Lee endorses worked, we would not have the environmental and political crises we are facing today on the national forests. The pressures on the national forests are far greater and more complex today than they were early in the century, and we have environmental laws to enforce now as well.

Lee suggests that midwestern state-forest management is a model for the national forests; it is not. The timber industry has had forty years to be jump-started by the national forests, and it is time now to shift harvesting to private lands. Buyers of federal timber will do so only when limits are set on the sale of national-forest timber.

Lee is mistaken when he says that demand for timber is rising. Per capita use of wood today is less than half of what it was in 1906, when each Ameri-

can used on the average 526 board feet a year. In 1988, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, per capita consumption was only 235 board feet.

Lee is correct that environmental regulations are a factor in making timber sales below-cost, but that is an indicator that the sales are not worthwhile, not that we don't need environmental regulation. Also, I never suggested that logging should not continue for purposes such as reducing fuel wood, controlling insect infestation or disease, and creating more diversity in an even-aged forest. Even with the end of commercial logging on the national forests it would make sense to use forestry as a tool to manage a healthy forest ecosystem, and sometimes this does include logging. But logging for this purpose is vastly different from the money-losing commercial enterprise we now have on the national forests.

I did not suggest that timber-dependent communities convert their economic base to tourism, as Lee says. I did suggest that these communities need a *diverse* economic base, as their heavy dependence on timber makes them vulnerable in what is a wildly cyclical industry. In fact, timber workers in these communities could continue to be employed in the woods—rehabilitating the national forests and working as loggers on private forests as the demand for timber shifts to these lands.

John Beuter is absolutely correct when he says that Forest Service employees are not "uncaring, timber-crazed Neanderthals." They are a group of dedicated professionals, some of whom have been greatly disturbed by the intense pressures of their jobs to get out a timber cut demanded by Congress and at the same time meet the toughest environmental regulations in the world. They say it can't be done and something must change. I have nothing but respect for the professionals of the U.S. Forest Service. I think they deserve a break from the tyranny of the timber ethic.

AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

Regina E. Herzlinger ("Healthy Competition," August *Atlantic*) argues that the United States could rein in its spiraling health-care costs if only



Americans personally paid a greater share of their own medical expenses. She wants us to buy our own catastrophic insurance coverage but at the same time pay for smaller expenses out of our own pockets.

Herzlinger is surely correct that our present health-insurance arrangements, despite their high administrative costs and bureaucratic intrusiveness, provide inadequate restraint on medical expenses. As she points out, covered patients (and doctors) are insulated from the financial consequences of the care prescribed and received, while too many millions of Americans have little or no health insurance at all. Yet it is exceedingly unlikely that Herzlinger's proposed remedies would cure the major ills of American health care. There are, regrettably, too many weaknesses in her reasoning for me to provide a detailed critique, but two points are particularly important.

First, health care is not just another commodity. As an example of the benefits of competition and educated consumers, Herzlinger points to the U.S. automobile market. But obtaining hospital care—for Herzlinger the primary source of medical inflation—is hardly like shopping for a new car. It is more like looking for a tow truck and a mechanic at 2:00 A.M. on a deserted road in the middle of nowhere. You take what you can get, you do what they say, and you pay what they charge. The idea of allocating hospital care by disposable income is morally objectionable, politically unacceptable, and practically unworkable.

Second, it is now almost a pastime for Americans to trade nightmare stories about their health-insurance coverage. Anyone with recent medical-care experience knows that our private and public mélange has become as complex and unintelligible as the tax code. Most Americans assume that any serious proposal for health-care reform would begin by overhauling this failing industry. Yet Herzlinger's proposals would leave it largely untouched.

TED MARMOR
Yale University
New Haven, Conn.

"Healthy Competition" certainly presents a refreshing approach to curing some of the ills associated with today's health-care system. As the founder and CEO of a national health-

care company that focuses on providing infusion therapy and related non-hospital medical services, I have watched the inefficiencies associated with the current hospital system escalate over the past ten years. The growing prevalence of competitive health-care services should be stimulating hospital managers to narrow their product line and focus on their strengths (that is, trauma care). Instead, hospitals continue to compete with one another for technology, physicians, and capital, and drive the costs of health care upward.

PATRICK S. SMITH
Critical Care America
Westborough, Mass.

Having performed more than 25,000 operations as a plastic surgeon, I endorse Regina Herzlinger's idea that the American public has more than enough sophistication and common sense to select what it perceives to be good as opposed to bad. Most plastic surgery is elective and is usually paid for out of the family treasury. Price, quality, accommodations, amenities, and so forth are all seriously considered in this brand of medicine, where shopping is the rule, not the exception.

JOHN N. SIMONS, M.D.
Health Campus International
Paradise Valley, Ariz.

Regina E. Herzlinger replies:

My proposal will provide all Americans with enough money to buy their own health-insurance policies. Health-insurance companies will compete for this market by offering new, efficient policies that cover only cost-effective providers of health-care services. This competition will create better choices for the American public than the present small range of health-insurance options they are offered by their employers or unions, or the one health-insurance policy that national health insurance would offer. And it will wring the inefficiency out of the system.

ADVICE & CONSENT

Fred Catapano's article "Principles of Holistic Medicine Applied to Infrastructure Maintenance: A Test Case" (September *Atlantic*) was full of helpful revelations and recommendations. We

at the New York City Department of Transportation are responsible for 872 bridges, five tunnels, and nearly 20,000 lane miles of city streets. Our engineers and maintenance workers have developed such a fondness for this most intricate of urban infrastructures that we believe that a bond has formed between them. Just as scientists cannot determine why a bumblebee is capable of flying according to the laws of aerodynamics, there are some bridges our engineers believe remain standing because of the affection that is shown to those structures by our employees.

Regarding the specific recommendations that Catapano presents, we've implemented several of them already. He suggested that we change the names of some of our bridges to enhance their self-esteem. Three years ago David Letterman recommended that we change the name of the Williamsburg Bridge to the Mookie Wilson Bridge. We are looking into that.

Catapano also recommended increasing tolls. Our problem is that none of the city-owned bridges have tolls now. We agree that tolls would increase bridge self-esteem, and the money raised would go for preventive maintenance. A warm coat of paint is welcome to a bridge.

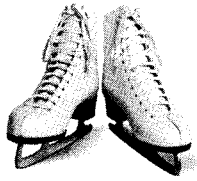
He also suggested that we alter the paint scheme. A June issue of *Newsday* explained our desire to change to a much more sympathetic color. We've changed from gray to blue. I have proposed that we change colors every year, so that you could tell the year a bridge was painted just by looking at it. In that way the public can see if we are staying on the proper painting cycle.

Catapano also suggested that we observe significant anniversaries. Everyone in New York remembers the hundred-year celebration of the Brooklyn Bridge, in 1983. The Grucci fireworks were spectacular. We believe that's why the Brooklyn Bridge is one of our happiest bridges. We intend to observe hundred-year anniversaries for the other East River bridges.

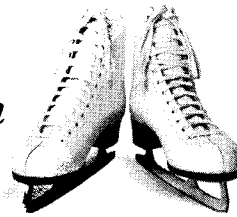
In conclusion, New York's infrastructure, we believe, is happier than what the newspapers say. Our bridges and roads need much more work, but they know that we are trying hard to make them better.

LUCIUS J. RICCIO
Commissioner of Transportation
New York, N.Y.

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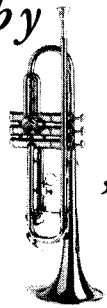


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Kathleen Battle



and Wynton Marsalis



choreography by Bill T. Jones



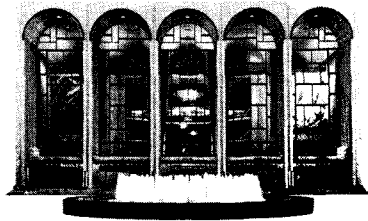
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XXXVI
For in the Market-place, one Dush of Dou,
I watch'd the Potter slumping his neck Crou,
And with his all obliterated Tongue
It murmured - "Gently, Brother, gently, pray!"

XXXVII
Ah, fill the Cup: - what boots it to repent
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet:
Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday,
Why fret about them if To-day be sweet!

XXXVIII
One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste -
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste:
The Stars are setting and the Cuckoo
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing - Oh, make haste!

XXXIX
How long, how long, in infinite Pursuit
Of This and That endemour and dispute?
Better be merry with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.



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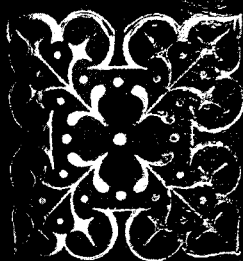
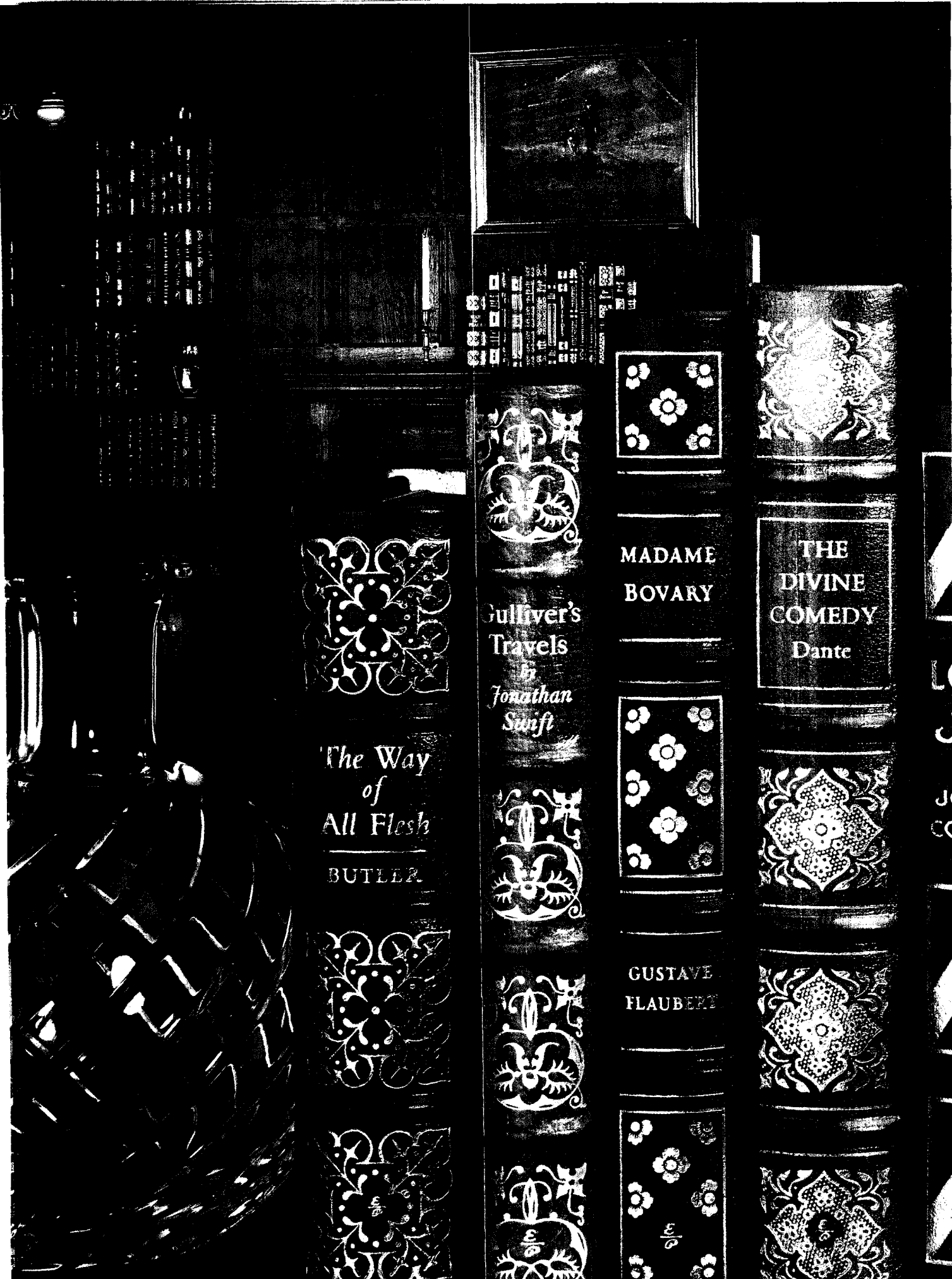
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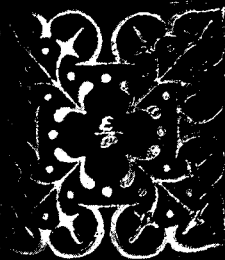
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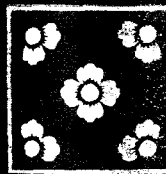
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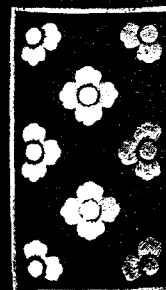
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All Flesh*
BUTLER



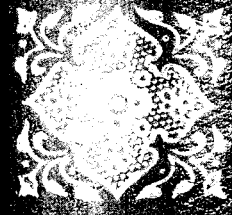
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Swift*



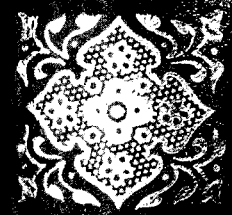
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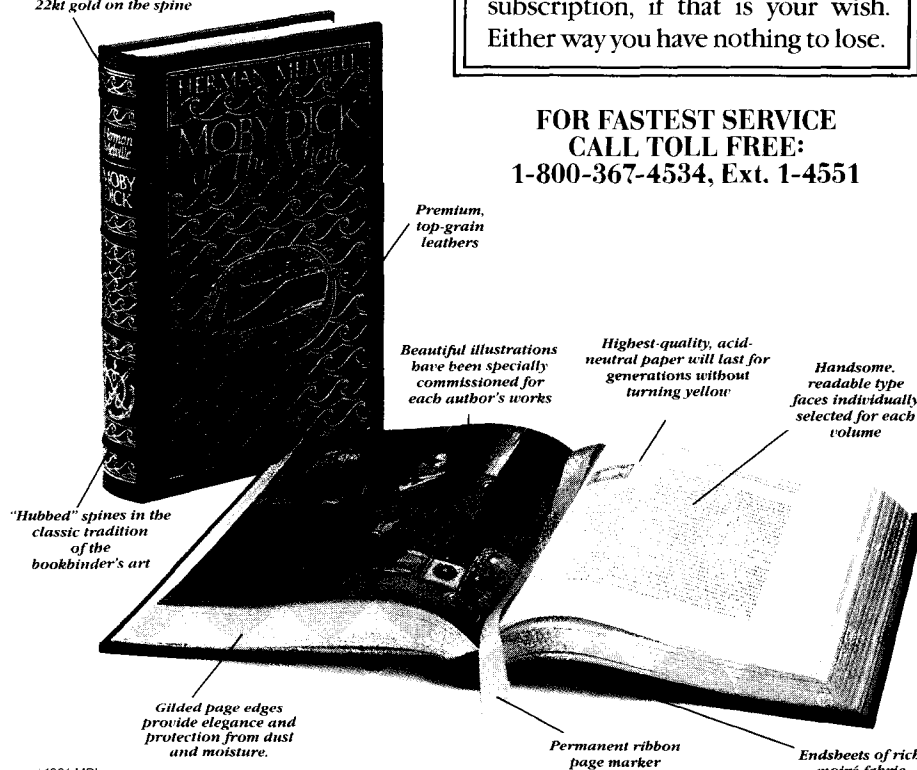
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GOVERNMENT

January 2, the U.S. Treasury begins sending out checks of \$100,000 or more to eligible 1992 presidential-primary candidates, for their campaigns. To qualify, candidates must have raised at least \$5,000 in each of 20 states through individual contributions of no more than \$250; the Treasury checks will match these contributions. Millions more will be disbursed to candidates by November, culminating in a grant of \$53 million to each party's ticket. The source of this money: the Presidential Election Campaign Fund, which consists of one-dollar donations from taxpayers who checked that box on their federal income-tax forms. Contributions to the fund have dwindled in recent years, leading the Federal Election Commission to project a possible shortfall this year and a complete collapse of the fund during the 1996 election cycle, unless Congress rewrites the rules.

ENVIRONMENT

Americans are faced this month with the dismal chore of disposing of the more than 35 million Christmas trees they bought last month. Most trees will simply go out in the trash. A few may be adorned with suet and orange pieces and placed in the yard—thus providing food and cover for birds until spring, when there is much less left to dispose of. Some communities and organizations have set up recycling stations where trees can be taken to be chipped up into



mulch. Perhaps the most innovative use of the superannuated conifers is found in coastal areas: trees are taken to beaches and anchored firmly in rows to trap windblown sand and help reduce beach erosion. Because of their many branches, the trees are more effective than snow fences, and are usually buried in new dunes within six months. Last year in Galveston, Texas, at the thirteenth annual "Trees for the Dunes" effort, approximately six miles of beachfront was stabilized in this way.



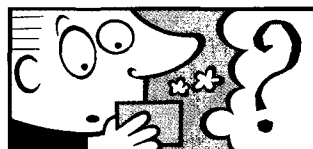
THE SKIES

January 1, Venus, at its maximum brightness for the year, passes just north of the Moon shortly before dawn. 4, the Quadrantid meteor shower, one of the best of the year, peaks a few hours before dawn. 4, New Moon; also an annular solar eclipse, which occurs when the Moon is far enough from Earth that it does not completely cover the Sun, leaving a bright ring around its edge. Observers in the Los Angeles area will be able to see the ring at sunset; elsewhere in the western U.S., a partial eclipse will be visible from late afternoon to sunset. 19, Full Moon, also called the Wolf, Old, or Little Young Bear Comes Down the Tree Moon.

Q & A

Are Social Security numbers recycled?

No, nor are they likely to be any time soon. With nine digits each, the numbers are drawn from a pool of nearly a billion. Some 350 million have been assigned to date; the remainder represent roughly a century's supply. It may appear that numbers are reused—one's child may have a lower number than oneself, for in-



stance—because chronology plays only a tertiary role in how they are assigned. The first three digits reflect the state in which an applicant resides, and for security reasons the middle pair follow a seemingly random sequence; only the final four are assigned chronologically. Until the 1970s cards were issued by local offices, and names and numbers were typically filled in manually, often while the applicants waited. Today, amid growing concern about illegal immigrants—a large potential market for illicit cards—all cards are issued from a central office in Baltimore, where applicants' names and numbers are printed on them during the middle of the night by a computer secured in a vault.

ARTS & LETTERS

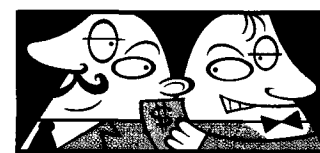
Business is brisk this month at the music-licensing houses that control the copyrights for musicals, as requests flood in from high school, college, and community theater groups preparing to mount their spring productions. The rights to almost all U.S. musicals are held by four companies, which compute a royalty rate and rental fee for use of their authorized scripts and scores according to such factors as the size of the auditorium, the length of the run, the ticket price, and whether or not the group belongs to the theatrical union Actors' Equity. Not surprisingly, the most frequently requested shows are classics such as *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Music Man*, *Grease*, *Peter Pan*,



and *Guys and Dolls*; however, theater groups can also consider shows that have never played on Broadway. Music companies have recently begun to offer these works in the hope that they will gain a grass-roots following that might later facilitate a successful Broadway run.

HEALTH & SAFETY

This is an especially hazardous month as far as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is concerned: twice as many infants succumb to the disorder in January as in July. SIDS is, of course, the abrupt and inexplicable death of an apparently healthy infant. Some 5,500 children in the United States die from SIDS each year, making it the leading cause of death among infants more than a month old. The syndrome's tendency to strike during cold weather is as little understood as are its causes and prevention, although some recent studies suggest a possible link to infectious diseases, which are most common during winter months.

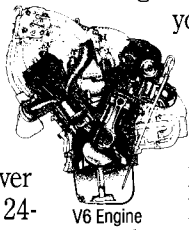


100 YEARS AGO

Moorfield Storey, writing in the January, 1892, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "We all recognize a steady decadence in our politics. The men in public life to-day are, with few exceptions, intellectually and morally inferior to the great statesmen of the war and the years which preceded it. Political preferment is less and less tempting to good men. The conditions of public life are more and more repellent. The tendency is dangerous, and it is our duty to arrest it. Is there not in all this reason for action; should we not at least recognize the situation, and seek to find a remedy?"

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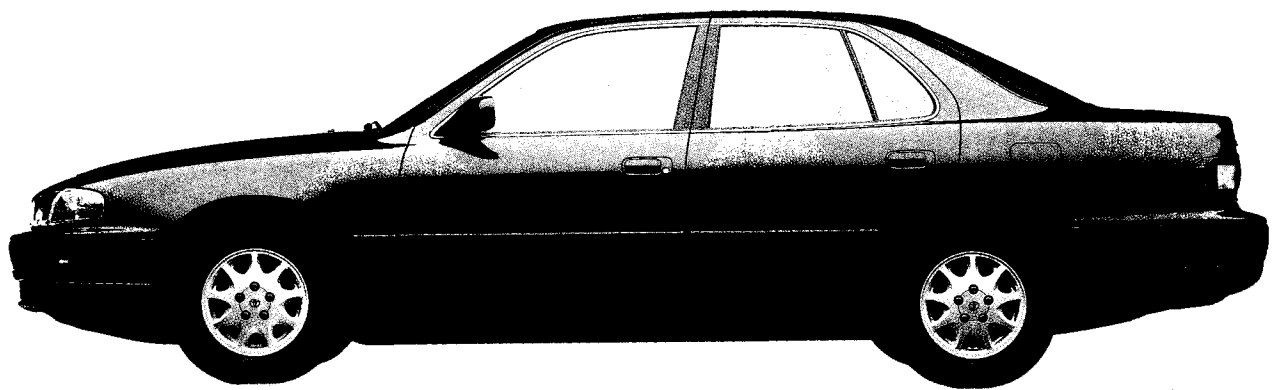
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REPORTS & COMMENT

WASHINGTON

Cooked Books

Shoddy and in some cases sharp practices by the Big Six accounting firms are the hidden element linking the financial scandals of the 1980s and 1990s

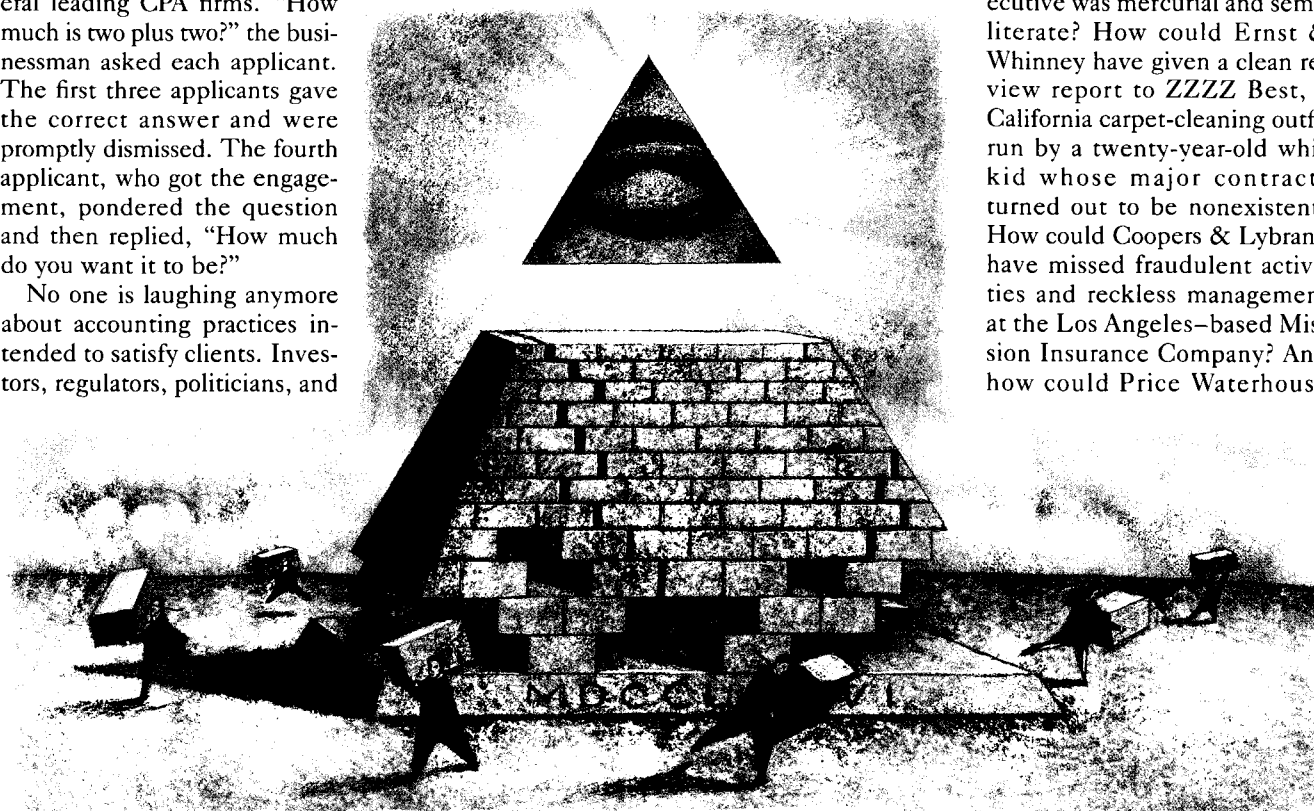
THERE'S AN OLD joke in the accounting profession about a businessman who wanted to hire an auditor. He set up interviews with representatives of several leading CPA firms. "How much is two plus two?" the businessman asked each applicant. The first three applicants gave the correct answer and were promptly dismissed. The fourth applicant, who got the engagement, pondered the question and then replied, "How much do you want it to be?"

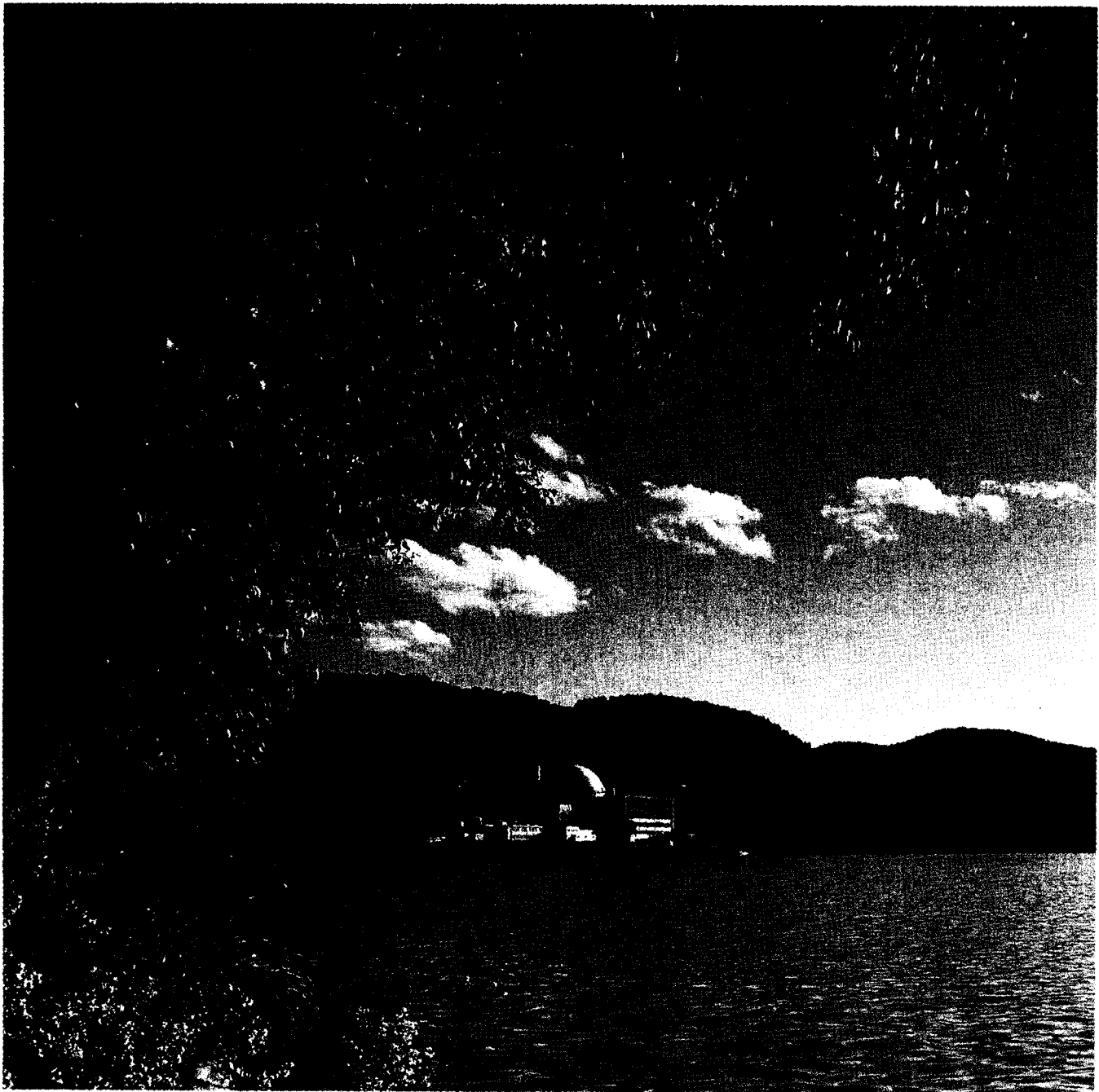
No one is laughing anymore about accounting practices intended to satisfy clients. Investors, regulators, politicians, and

accountants themselves are asking how so many insolvent and fraud-riddled banks, savings-and-loan associations, insurance companies, and industrial corporations could have received clean audits from major firms shortly before they collapsed.

As the accountants hasten to point out, not all business failures are audit failures. Less than one percent of audits produce allegations of malpractice. Sometimes conditions deteriorate rapidly after the audit is completed. Sometimes management is extremely clever in disguising illicit conduct. Markets can change in unpredictable ways, and the public can have unrealistic expectations about what auditors are supposed to do.

But still: you have to wonder how twenty-eight of thirty savings-and-loans that failed in California in 1985 and 1986 could have received clean audits the year before they went belly up. How could Arthur Young have certified Vernon Savings & Loan when more than 90 percent of its loans were bad, or allowed Charles Keating to siphon money from Lincoln Savings & Loan? How could Deloitte, Haskins & Sells have okayed the books at Centrust Savings Bank of Miami when its chairman was spending millions of dollars in insured deposits on Old Masters and other luxuries? How could Main Hurdman and then Touche Ross have signed off on the cooked books of the Wedtech Corporation, whose chief executive was mercurial and semi-literate? How could Ernst & Whinney have given a clean review report to ZZZZ Best, a California carpet-cleaning outfit run by a twenty-year-old whiz kid whose major contracts turned out to be nonexistent? How could Coopers & Lybrand have missed fraudulent activities and reckless management at the Los Angeles-based Mission Insurance Company? And how could Price Waterhouse





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have taken so long to blow the whistle on the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, known worldwide as the bank of crooks and criminals?

Some of the answers will no doubt emerge from a tidal wave of litigation that has engulfed the big accounting firms amid the wreckage of these and other failed enterprises. As of last May 1, federal banking regulators alone had thirty-two lawsuits pending against accounting firms, seeking \$2.5 billion for damages to government insurance funds from accounting malpractice. This litigation could well be followed by billions of dollars more of derivative claims from piggybacking plaintiffs.

Some of the lawsuits may be frivolous, a search for deep pockets by investors and creditors desperately seeking scapegoats for their bum investments. Other cases will be settled, or covered by insurance. But the sheer volume of alleged audit failures has already traumatized the once staid and gentlemanly accounting profession. Legal-liability exposure has become the industry's top concern. Accounting journals are filled with articles about sheltering personal assets, damage control, and the fine print of liability-insurance policies. Partners at big firms, once seen as having the job security of tenured professors, are being laid off by the hundreds. The traditional structure of the accounting partnership itself, according to which partners can be held personally liable for the actions of their firms, may be doomed. Accounting groups have begun the tedious process of trying to persuade states to allow CPAs to form limited-liability corporations. It's already too late for Laventhol & Horwath, which was the nation's seventh-largest accounting firm when it collapsed, in 1990, largely because of costly malpractice lawsuits. One or more of the six biggest firms could follow if major litigation goes against them. And, as in so many other industries, America's post-Second World War leadership in accounting may be usurped from abroad.

UNDERSTANDING how big-time accounting got into this mess requires understanding how the auditing system developed in the United States and how the go-go years of the 1980s exposed the system's flaws. The audit function, along with the pro-

totype of the modern corporation with multiple shareholders, was brought to the United States by British accountants in the late nineteenth century. The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), a voluntary association to which about three quarters of the CPAs in the United States belong, traces its roots to 1887; its creation marked the emergence of accountancy as a profession. When the unfettered capitalism of the turn of the century led to demands for truthful financial reporting, state boards of accountancy were formed to confer standards on the fledgling profession. In 1933 and 1934, as a result of the stock-market crash and continuing investment scams, the first federal securities acts were passed. The new laws required that public companies have their financial statements audited by independent accountants. But although the federal government mandated audits, it refrained from providing auditors and even from establishing audit standards, leaving both to the profession itself. Nor did the new securities laws provide the money to pay the auditors, so companies hired and paid their own watchdogs—a situation that has been likened to authors' being able to pick their own book reviewers.

To use another analogy, imagine if the meat you buy at the supermarket were inspected not by the U.S. Department of Agriculture but by private inspection firms hired by the meatpackers. Suppose these private inspectors defined their task as determining whether the cows were being slaughtered in accordance with generally accepted meatpacking principles (GAMP). Suppose further that if an inspector happened upon a blatant violation of GAMP, he would be obliged to report it not to the grocery or consumers but to the management of the meatpacking company that hired him to do the inspections. If management disagreed with the assessment, the inspector would have to decide whether to see things management's way or to walk off the job, allowing another inspection firm to pick up the business.

That may sound like a complicated recipe for allowing a lot of rotten meat to make its way to market, but it is approximately the system that has evolved for inspecting the financial statements of this nation's major corporations. Like any system premised on

biting the hand that feeds it, this one hasn't worked very well. Many corporations have come to view audits as little more than bothersome compliance exercises mandated by the Securities and Exchange Commission, to be accomplished at the lowest possible cost. Sophisticated investors have learned not to take audited financial statements at face value; unsophisticated investors have been burned time after time. Abraham J. Briloff, a professor emeritus of accounting at Baruch College, in New York, who is regarded as the prickly conscience of the profession and its most acerbic critic, has suggested that auditors' certificates be accompanied by a skull-and-crossbones logo, to show that swallowing or inhaling the reported data could be injurious to the reader's financial health.

Throughout the years, the public's perception of the auditors' role has varied considerably from the auditors' own definition of it. This chasm between what the auditors do and what the public thinks they do is delicately referred to as the expectations gap. Many people believe that auditors play detective, digging out aberrations and blowing the whistle at the slightest hint of wrongdoing. A clean audit is seen as akin to the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, stamped by wizened veterans who have painstakingly combed through the records and carefully tracked down every lead.

Auditors, however, define their role as merely testing whether management has fairly presented the financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, or GAAP—the admittedly permissive rules for financial reporting. Beyond that, auditors say, the best they can do is provide reasonable assurance—not a guarantee—that the financial statements are free of material misstatements. The auditor's final opinion, which carries the accounting firm's signature, falls into one of three categories: clean, or "unqualified," if the records amount to a fair representation of the company's underlying economic health; "qualified," if there are exceptions to an otherwise fair representation; and a "disclaimer," meaning the client's record-keeping is so inadequate that the auditor cannot even render an opinion. For companies experiencing serious financial difficulties, the auditor is also supposed to

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EVER BEEN
WARMED
BY THE
WINTER'S SUN

you
ALREADY
KNOW



THE
FEELING
of
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state whether there is "substantial doubt" that the entity can continue as a "going concern" for a reasonable period of time.

The most prestigious audits, the ones that carry the most weight, are those performed by the six largest firms—Arthur Andersen, Ernst & Young, Deloitte & Touche, Peat Marwick, Coopers & Lybrand, and Price Waterhouse. (The Big Six were known as the Big Eight until the merger of Ernst & Whinney with Arthur Young to form Ernst & Young, and the merger of Deloitte, Haskins & Sells with Touche Ross to form Deloitte & Touche.) In 1990 each of these firms took in more than \$1 billion in U.S. revenue and had more than 900 partners. Contrary to popular perception, however, much of the on-site audit work for these firms' clients is delegated by partners to young associates with four-year degrees, working on tight budgets and even tighter deadlines.

Exacerbating the expectations gap is continuing confusion over some very basic questions. For instance: Who is the auditor working for? Many accountants will say that their clients are the managers of the company that hired them. They talk in terms of an auditor-client relationship similar to the privilege afforded attorneys and doctors. But the U.S. Supreme Court, in the case of *U.S. v. Arthur Young*, has ruled otherwise. The Court held in 1984 that by certifying the public reports that depict a corporation's financial status, the independent auditor assumes a public responsibility transcending any employment relationship with the client and owes ultimate allegiance to the corporation's creditors and stockholders and to the investing public. "This 'public watchdog' function demands that the accountant maintain total independence from the client at all times and requires complete fidelity to the public trust," Chief Justice Warren Burger wrote.

The accounting profession, however, has been slow to grasp the full meaning of this. As recently as last June the 300,000-member AICPA opposed proposals to give regulators the power to review auditors' work papers, saying that such steps "could undermine the confidentiality of the auditor-

client relationship." Some critics of the profession see a misperception of who the client is as the essence of the problem. "The accountants think in their heart of hearts that they have what would amount to an attorney-client relationship, where in effect they could keep everything private," says Ron Wyden, an Oregon representative who has been trying to change auditors' responsibilities. "The Arthur Young case basically destroyed that possibility."



Another area of continuing confusion has been the degree to which auditors are responsible for searching for fraud. Early texts set forth three objectives for the audit: detection of fraud, technical errors, and errors of principle. As auditors increasingly experienced difficulty in finding carefully concealed frauds, they began to regard fraud detection as beyond their responsibility. Management was simply presumed to have integrity. More recently the profession has acknowledged a responsibility to attempt to detect "material fraud." But even if the auditor does discover undisclosed illegalities, these are reported to the company's management and directors, not to regulators or investors. If they refuse to act, the most the auditor is supposed to do is resign from the audit and make sure the client informs regulators of the reason for the "disengagement."

THE DEFECTS in the system have been evident for decades, but they became intolerable during the deregulated 1980s, when hundreds of billions of dollars of federally insured deposits fell into the hands of high-flying financial institutions run by roguish managers. Few would argue that auditors could have prevented the savings-and-loan crisis, although it might not have been as costly if the profession had fulfilled its responsibilities. Certainly federal regulators bear a large part of the blame for promulgating feeble regulatory accounting principles, or RAP, in a desperate attempt to disguise the problems until, it was hoped, the industry could grow out of them. Federal bank examiners, underpaid and stretched too thin, had little recourse when savings-and-loans used RAP to hide their insolvency. To its

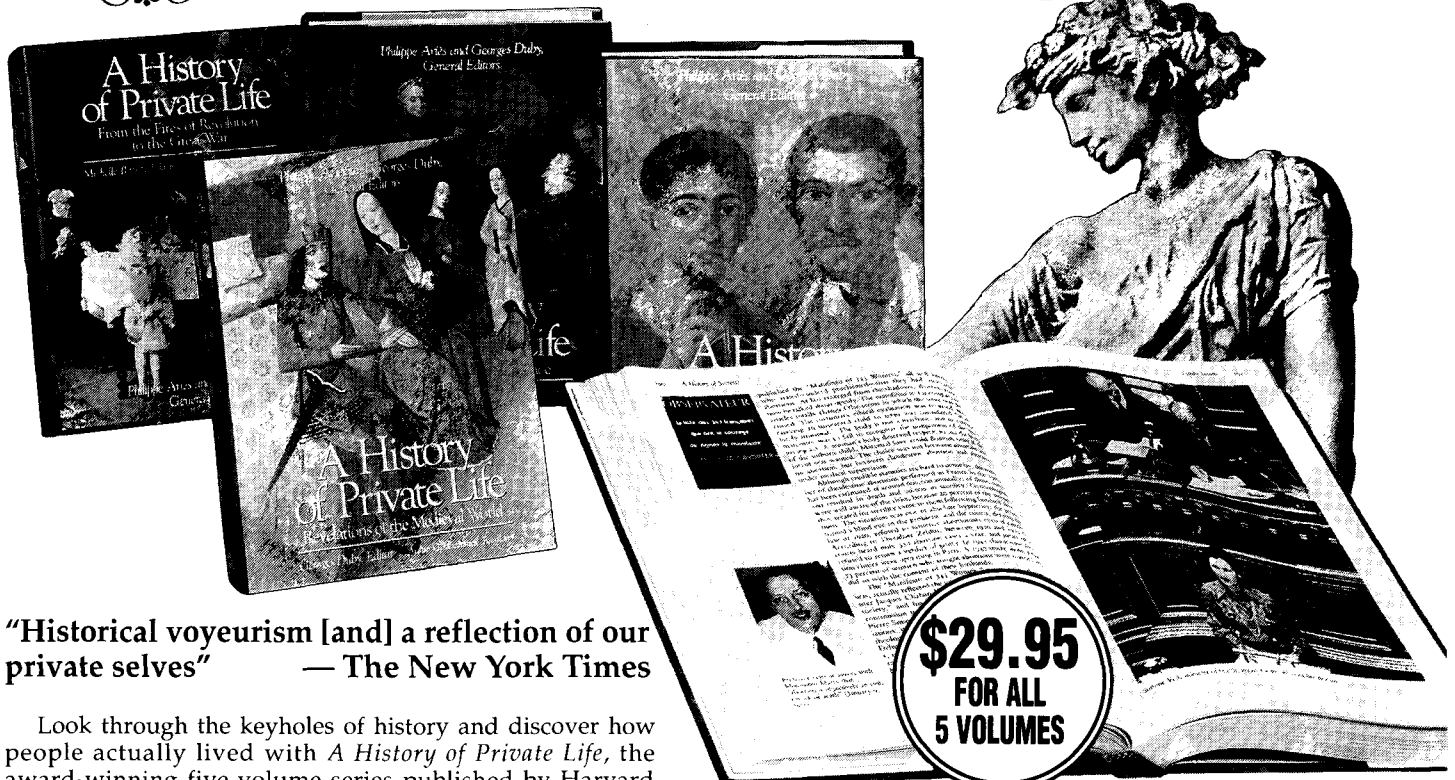
credit, the accounting profession resisted RAP, but the regulatory climate did communicate a mood of laxity that filtered through to the big firms' audits. Tough audits could have provided an early warning signal, waving red flags before million-dollar problems became billion-dollar problems. But rarely were the alarms sounded before it was too late. The profession, known for moving with what one accountant calls "geological speed" in the face of change, was unable to keep pace with the rapid changes in the economy. At a time when savings-and-loans were plunging headlong into complex financial dealings like real-estate development and mortgage-backed securities, the AICPA accounting guidelines, issued in 1979, were more applicable to the savings-and-loan industry's "3-6-3" days (pay three percent to depositors, lend the money at six percent, and be on the golf course by three in the afternoon). Although some interim guidance was issued, not until September of 1990 was a draft of a revised audit guide for savings institutions released.

The more the savings-and-loan crisis is dissected, however, the worse the accountants look. A General Accounting Office study of eleven Texas S&L failures found inadequate and unprofessional audits in six cases. Then there's the role accountants played in the nation's biggest thrift failure, the collapse of Lincoln Savings & Loan, which will cost taxpayers approximately \$2.6 billion and reportedly prompted an elderly investor to commit suicide. Most of the scrutiny in the Lincoln Savings & Loan case has focused on the five U.S. senators who went to bat for Charles Keating, the chairman of Lincoln's parent company, American Continental, of Phoenix. Yet when the Keating Five went into their now-famous meeting with federal regulators, on April 9, 1987, the senators thought they were on solid ground because they had a letter from Jack D. Atchison, a managing partner at Arthur Young's Phoenix office, stating that Lincoln was solvent and profitable.

According to notes taken by one of the participants at the meeting, Senator Dennis DeConcini, of Arizona, said, "Why would Arthur Young say these things? They have to guard their credibility too. They put the firm's neck out with this letter."



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"They have a client . . .," replied Michael Patriarca, a regulator.

DeConcini: "You believe they'd prostitute themselves for a client?"

Patriarca: "Absolutely. It happens all the time."

Another frequent occurrence is that the auditor switches sides and takes a job with the client. A little more than a year after the Keating Five's meeting with regulators, Atchison left Arthur Young to begin working for American Continental, at an annual salary of \$930,000. Asked by the House Banking Committee to testify about the affair, Atchison invoked his Fifth Amendment privilege. Arthur Young, which is now part of Ernst & Young, has agreed to pay the federal government more than \$40 million to settle charges that its Lincoln work was faulty.

Keating, meanwhile, had the gall to sue the Office of Thrift Supervision in an effort to regain control of Lincoln after it was seized by federal regulators, in 1989. Unfortunately for him, the case was assigned to U.S. District Court Judge Stanley Sporkin, a former chief of enforcement at the Securities and Exchange Commission. After listening to testimony about all of Keating's financial shenanigans, Sporkin, himself a certified public accountant, ruled that Lincoln had been operating in an unsafe and unsound manner and that regulators were fully justified in seizing it. Sporkin went on to note that Keating had surrounded himself with cadres of lawyers and accountants even as American Continental siphoned money out of Lincoln. "Where were these professionals . . . when these clearly improper transactions were being consummated?" Sporkin wrote in his widely quoted opinion. "Why didn't any of them speak up or disassociate themselves from the transactions?" As it turned out, Atchison's successor at Arthur Young, Janice Vincent, did refuse to certify some of Keating's further dealings. Naturally, Keating tried to have her replaced. Failing that, he hired a competing firm.

Accountants also played a prominent role in another publicized thrift failure, that of Silverado Banking, Savings and Loan, a Denver concern of which the President's son, Neil Bush, was a board member. In 1985 Silverado's auditors, Ernst & Whinney, forced the thrift to

report \$20 million in losses because of problem loans. Silverado's managers weren't pleased with that result, so they got rid of Ernst & Whinney and hired Coopers & Lybrand, which took a more flexible view of the books. In 1986 Silverado reported \$15 million in profits and the managers got \$2.7 million in bonuses. A year and a half later the enterprise collapsed, at a cost to the government of some \$1 billion. Bank examiners later called the case "a clear example . . . of opinion shopping" and said that the auditors in Coopers & Lybrand's Denver office had lacked expertise for the complex assignment. Last July, Coopers & Lybrand agreed to pay \$20 million to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation to settle potential claims relating to its Silverado audits.

Turn the spotlight on the auditors' role in the nation's most spectacular bank failures and, again, the picture isn't pretty. Consider the 1988 collapse of First Republic Bank Corporation, of Dallas, which had been formed a year earlier through the merger of Republic Bank with InterFirst Corporation. According to a complaint filed by the Securities and Exchange Commission, Arthur Young filed misleading audits of Republic Bank at a time when partners in the accounting firm held \$21.8 million in loans from the Dallas bank. Of the partners who received loans from the bank, at least ten were on the client-service team for Republic Bank, including three senior members of the audit team. (Ernst & Young is contesting the complaint and says that the Arthur Young auditors met the standards at the time.) One would think it would be obvious that such loans from a bank to its "independent" auditors should be prohibited, but it took the AICPA until September of last year to approve a rule banning its members from taking most loans from audit clients.

In the Bank of Credit and Commerce International case, possibly the biggest bank fraud in history, Price Waterhouse attested to the bank's financial statements as "fair and true" as late as April of 1990, despite having evidence of fraudulent transactions. Price Waterhouse officials in London were apparently concerned that qualifying their opinion of BCCI's books would trigger a depositor run and the bank's collapse.

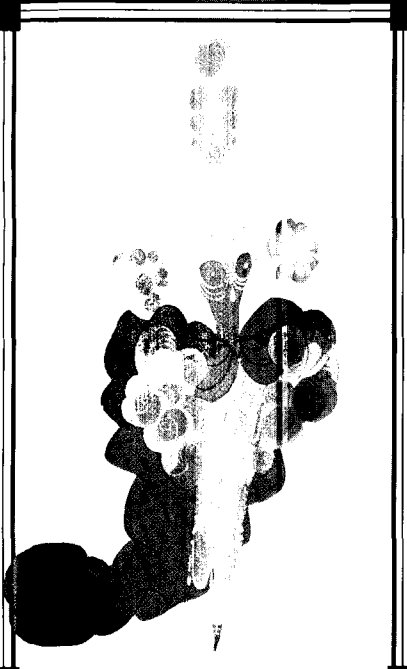
A COMMON THEME in audit failures is a lack of true independence on the part of the auditors. This is rarely the result of outright corruption. The vast majority of accountants are honest and dedicated, and bribery has been a factor in only a few major audit failures, such as the collapse of ESM Government Securities, of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, which touched off a savings-and-loan crisis in Ohio. The coercion is more subtle, a series of short-term economic incentives built into the system that make it more tempting for the auditor to be a shill for management than a public watchdog. As the audit firms became more competitive and bottom-line-oriented, the pressure to retain fee-paying clients and perform quick audits overwhelmed concerns about the firms' long-term reputations. Another factor is that traditional audit work is increasingly taking a back seat to a variety of other services being offered by the major accounting firms. In 1990 the Big Six firms received just 49.6 percent of their revenues from auditing and accounting, down from 62.4 percent in 1982, with the majority of billings now being for tax work and management consulting. Some firms are offering audits—their exclusive franchise—at big discounts to attract clients for their more lucrative consulting services: the profession's traditional function has been downgraded to a loss leader.

Compounding the independence problem is the failure of the audited financial statements to reflect economic reality. Auditors have frequently allowed transactions that can somehow be shoehorned into GAAP but bear little or no resemblance to the real world. As a result, institutions that appear to have substantial assets turn out to be insolvent. The General Accounting Office study of eleven failed thrifts found a startling gap: accountants had certified the S&Ls as having a total positive net worth of \$44 million, yet at the time they failed, five to seventeen months after the date of the last audit reports, they were \$1.5 billion in the hole. In case after case, U.S. Comptroller General Charles Bowsher notes, "the value melts right off the balance sheet." For example, thrifts were allowed to value junk bonds and real-estate investments at the amount they paid for them, even if the market for

(Continued on page 35)

arts & ENTERTAINMENT

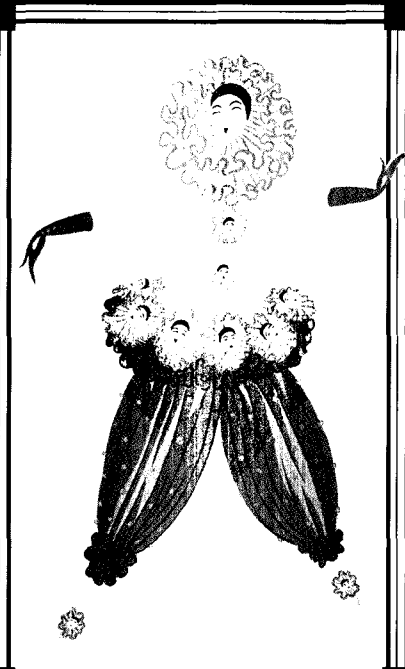
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JESTER. FOR THE BALLET
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PIERROT. FOR THE BALLET
LE BAL DE L'OPÉRA, PARIS, 1937



SNOB. FOR THE BALLET
LE BAL DE L'OPÉRA, PARIS, 1939

DANCE
THEATER POPULAR
MUSIC JAZZ
CLASSICAL MUSIC
FILM

EVENTS IN
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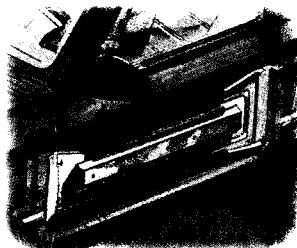


ITALIAN SINGER. FOR THE OPERA
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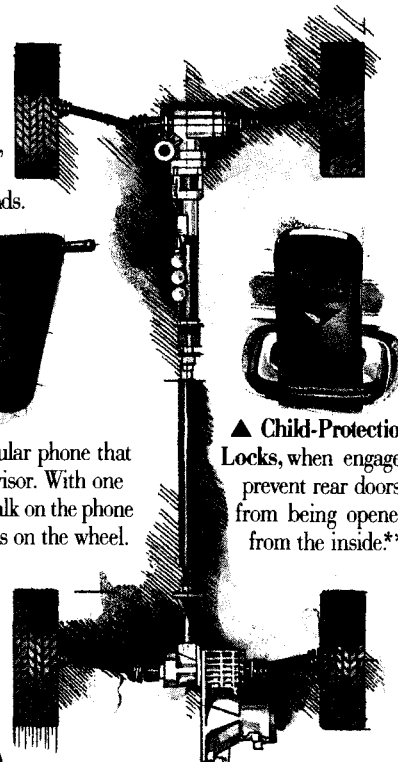


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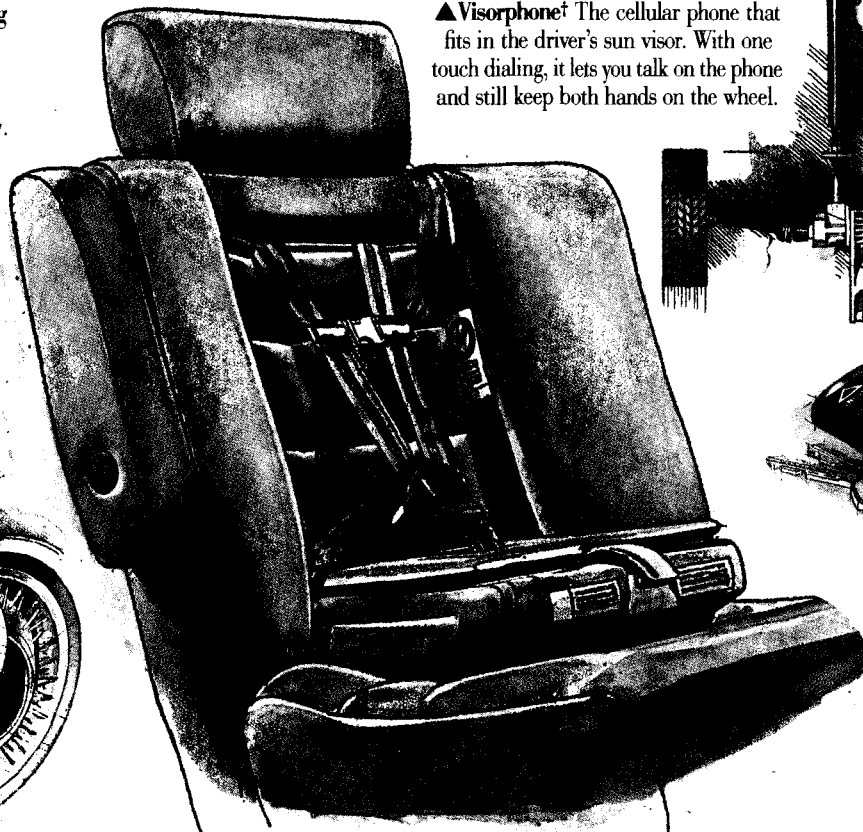
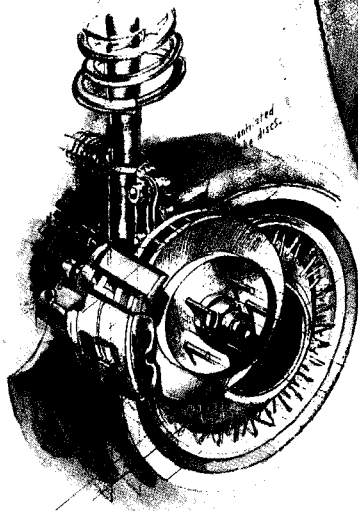


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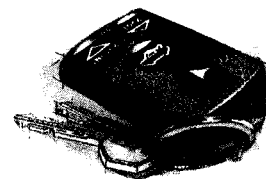


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CLASSICAL MUSIC

by Matthew Gurewitsch

PLAYING IN HARMONY

For many seasons, the New York Philharmonic has been hard to care about. No one denied that, player for player, the orchestra could bear comparison with any other—but as for the joy of music.... Except on special nights, say with Leonard Bernstein, attitudes on the stage as decoded through the music seemed to range from indifference to contempt. Kurt Masur, who took over as music director this season, may be the only maestro at large to have played a direct role in global affairs. When the Berlin Wall was crumbling, he brought to the table the squabbling factions in Leipzig, turning the tide of chaos. He could have taken over the reins of state, but what came to pass was still more unexpected. He was offered New York and took it, retaining his post as



Music director Kurt Masur

Gewandhauskapellmeister at home. *Gewandhaus* ("draper's house") is the name of the Leipzig orchestra's hall. The term *Kapellmeister*, often misconstrued as "master of the chapel," means "leader of the band"—a functional title, not honorific. But early indications are that Masur is just who the Philharmonic needed: a serious musician and a leader capable of dialogue. Three months into his tenure, he called an unprecedented "Philharmonic Forum" to hear from his audience. From the first night, the players have been responding as if inspired by a common purpose. The next chance to hear Masur with the New York Philharmonic is February 20 through 29, in programs including Beethoven, Brahms, Franck, and Strauss. And watch for the partnership's new recordings on the Teldec label.

CRUEL TALES TOLD 'ROUND THE FIRE

If you think Oedipus had problems, consider Kullervo. Orphaned as a boy and sold into slavery, he attains manhood, dishonors his sister, not knowing who she is, discovers his parents, who were not dead after all, sees his whole family die of woe over his crime, loses his only friend to madness, and takes his own life. Taken from the *Kalevala*, Finland's national epic, this bloody subject has occupied Finnish artists for generations, most lately the composer Aulis Sallinen, who commands a savage grandeur and stringent lyricism that should serve it well. His new opera was written for the inauguration of a new opera house in Helsinki in 1989. But construction is still incomplete, and now it is the Los Angeles Music Center that will present *Kullervo*'s world premiere, on February 25. A complete recording on the Ondine label will be released at the same time. Jorma Hynninen, who in other new Finnish operas has created leading roles (among them a saint, a king, and the artist Vincent van Gogh), heads the all-Finnish cast. "In olden times," he says, "people in the forest told each other stories. Often, they are very cruel, but they are very exciting. What is the music for this kind of story? I feel it's very beautiful."

OUT OF DRY DOCK

Giuseppe Verdi recommended Alberto Franchetti, Arturo Toscanini championed him, and Enrico Caruso sang one of his arias on what may well have been his very first record. He had bad breaks, too. He let go of the rights to Sardou's *La Tosca*, a vehicle for Sarah Bernhardt, when Puccini's publisher asked him to. And his opera *Cristoforo Colombo*, launched in the explorer's home town of Genoa in 1892, was soon lost in the mists of oblivion. On February 17, it sails back into view with the Greater Miami Opera's revival, the first in America in 78 years.



Cecilia Bartoli

200 CANDLES FOR GIOACCHINO

Those who used to think Rossini meant *The Barber of Seville* and the *William Tell* Overture know better now. When, rich and famous, the originator of the florid, infinitely flexible bel-canto style quit composing opera, at age 37, he had more than 40 to his credit, among them magnificent tragedies and romances on the most sweeping scale. Posterity has begun to discover the unpublished songs he wrote later for the jewels they are.

Gioacchino Rossini was born on February 29, 1792, and Lincoln Center is celebrating. Cecilia Bartoli, 22, performs her bewitching program of Rossini songs (available on London Records) on February 23. On the birthday comes a gala, with the generalissimos of the Rossini Revival out in force: Marilyn Horne, who spear-headed it; Samuel Ramey, who proved that a man could make the cut; and more. A repeat of the gala on March 2 will be telecast live on PBS.

VOICE OF THE POET

or its centennial season, last year, Carnegie Hall introduced some dozen commissioned new works, with the promise of more to follow. The idea was simplicity itself. Match the day's leading composers with the day's leading performers, and hope for results that do them honor. The first of the post-centennial commissions is *Honey and Rue*, a song cycle for soprano Kathleen Battle and the Orchestra of St. Luke's by André Previn to texts by novelist Toni Morrison (*Tar Baby*, *Beloved*), who awaits the premiere, on January 5, with anticipation keener than for the publication of any book. She has heard the music at the piano, but that is not enough. "By the time a book comes out," Morrison says, "it's almost an anticlimax. People are reacting to something



Kathleen Battle

that's really over. But here ... this is a live performance. I can't imagine anything more spectacular than that. One song is clearly a spiritual—my effort to write what is generally known as an anonymous piece. One is a ballad. There are two or three jazz pieces. Some are melancholy; some are jubilant. The possibilities are enormous. But the work is not really accomplished until André conducts and Kathleen sings."

Matthew Gurewitsch is a writer who lives in New York.

DANCE AND THEATER

by Laura Jacobs and Matthew Gurewitsch

DOUBLE, DOUBLE TOIL AND TROUBLE



Victor Garber (right) face off in this month's Broadway premiere by the Lincoln Center Theater at the Cort. A match of champions—"And damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'" —M.G.

In *Two Shakespearean Actors*, an elocutionary drunken British has-been (think Richard Burton) and an athletic philandering American (think Errol Flynn) are both preparing to play Macbeth. The year is 1849; the place is New York. Riots erupt. People die. From a shred of fact, the playwright Richard Nelson has spun a brilliant fantasia on the vanities and terrors in the twilight zone between what we call theater and what we call real life. Brian Bedford (left) and



YEAR OF THE PRINCE

Pericles, Prince of Tyre is the ultimate glorification of the Second Chance. The hero's bride bears him a daughter on shipboard, apparently dies, and is buried at sea. But the coffin floats to safety, and she lives as a priestess until the Goddess calls her husband back to her side. He, meanwhile, has found their long-lost child, also presumed dead. Few could shape such travails to advantage, and the mystery playwright of the first two acts did not. Then came Shakespeare, working in the late fabulist

manner that culminated in *The Tempest*, to supply Acts III to V. *Pericles*, seen rarely, is everywhere this season. After Campbell Scott's performance with the New York Shakespeare Festival in November, stagings follow at Center Stage, Baltimore; the Shakespeare Repertory, Chicago; and the Guthrie Laboratory Theatre, Minneapolis. Catch one if you can. Even by Shakespeare's standards, the flooding grace of the recognition scene between father and daughter is unequaled. —M.G.

ATTENTION!

Paul Taylor's new *Company B* has all the speed and rattling energy of snake eyes—it's both tossed off and venomously final. The music is Andrews Sisters wartime tunes, and their lollipop growl, their ball-bearing hum and honey, skirts sentiment, which suits Taylor fine. On the ruffled surface, *Company B*'s subject is rummy dates and randy leave and longing, but deep down it's about time—time running out, lengthening, and lost. Taylor



Taylor's Company B

gives us sex and subtext in dances of crisp, unforgettable detail. Not since Twyla Tharp's *Nine Sinatra Songs* have we seen a dance to hang a season on: *Company B* is a crowd-pleaser and masterpiece in one. This month and next the company will perform

at Boston's Wang Center; Dance St. Louis; S.M.U. Dallas; Washington's Kennedy Center; Knoxville, Tennessee; the University of North Carolina in Greensboro; and SUNY Purchase, in New York. —L.J.

FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED?

A new generation of American Ballet Theatre dancers will have a crack at Antony Tudor's *Undertow* when the troubling work comes back into repertory, January 18, after a 12-year absence. Birth, copulation, and death (embellished by rape and homoeroticism) drive Tudor's Edwardian metaworld. Balletomanes of 1945 had never seen anything like it. Nor had dancers: Alicia Alonso recalls that some of Tudor's coaching suggestions were "too dirty to repeat." Even those who admired its brilliant pantomime thought the work obscene. January through April ABT tours to San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House, Mexico City, Orange County Performing Arts Center in Costa Mesa, Chicago's Civic Opera House, and Washington's Kennedy Center. —L.J.

HE SAID SHE SAID

Three decades ago, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* took Broadway by storm, and Edward Albee was briefly the toast of the intelligentsia (there was still one of those) and a box-office hero. Through three king-size acts, two couples drank, swore, and tore into each other's self-delusions. The principal pair were George and Martha, and by the dawn's early light, they knew who they were, God help them. Now, many flops later, Albee is back with *Marriage Play*. There are two acts this time, and two characters, indistinguishable from George and Martha but called He and She. Unveiled in Vienna in 1987, the new work receives its American premiere this



Edward Albee

month under the playwright's direction at the Alley Theatre in Houston, before transferring to Princeton's McCarter Theater on February 11. At the same time, *Who's Afraid...* sees revivals by the Arizona Theatre Company (performances in Phoenix and Tucson), the Hartford Stage, and the PlayMakers Repertory, Chapel Hill. Whatever the fate of Albee's latest, his magnum opus still blazes. —M.G.

LOOK, THARP

Twyla Tharp has proved herself marvelously adaptive to the *fin de millenium* economic wilds. She's just formed another new contemporary/classical company. The first New York season, January 28 to February 9 at City Center, offers a company of 18 dancers, four guest artists from the Paris Opera Ballet, two premieres, and revivals of Tharp's sixties dream machine *Deuce Coupe* and her apotheosis of eighties aggression *The Golden Section*. And a look through the eye of the compass needle: Tharp herself plans to dance. —L.J.

Laura Jacobs is the editor-in-chief of Stagebill and a dance critic for The New Leader. Matthew Gurewitsch is a writer who lives in New York.

POPULAR MUSIC AND JAZZ

by Charles M. Young and Francis Davis

ELIZABETHAN POP

Mute Records has sent *Madra*, by Miranda Sex Garden, to both classical and alternative rock radio stations. That makes the group a rarity. What makes them unique is that they bring more freshness and spirit to "old" music than anyone since Pentangle in the late sixties. Three female students at the Purcell School of Music, in England, Miranda Sex Garden sing madrigals, Elizabethan popular songs characterized by intricate contrapuntal harmonies, no accompaniment, and a vision of love that is the World Trade Center of unrequitedness. Take "Fly Not So Fast," written by John Warb in 1612, as evidence that Top 40 subject matter hasn't



Miranda Sex Garden

changed much in 380 years: "Fly not so fast/my only joy and jewel/ Pity at last my tears/'O be not cruel/ Ay me, ay me/alas, alas/she's gone and left me/all joy, all joy is now bereft me."

Miranda Sex Garden have a second CD release with four different mixes of "Gush Forth My Tears"—now there's a title—backed with synthesized drum tracks. Unless you're a club DJ, stick with *Madra*. And watch for MSG in the future. Their formal training includes guitar, violin, bagpipes, recorder, and other instruments, so they should be expanding their range way beyond the a-cappella madrigal. —C.M.Y.

J. MACK IS BACK!

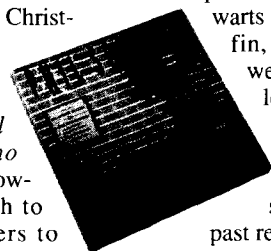
Actually, Jackie McLean—the alto saxophonist who provided a link between Charlie Parker and Ornette Coleman—never really went away. But much of his work after joining the faculty of the University of Hartford, in 1968, sounded tentative compared with his Prestige and Blue Note albums of the fifties and early-to-mid-sixties. McLean regained his form, however, on last year's *Dynasty* (Triloka), a concert recording featuring him with a tight quintet including his son René on tenor and

soprano saxophones. The new *Rites of Passage*, a studio session with the same band, is a worthy follow-up, despite its derivative original material by René and the pianist Hotep Idris Galeta. Heard to best advantage on his own "My Lady (Portrait of Doll)"—a restless ballad with a surprising, quick-stepping bridge—McLean shows that his greatest asset as a soloist remains his *sound*: strident and at least a quarter-note sharp, but emotionally right on the money and unmistakably his. —F.D.

RESCALING THE WALL OF SOUND

In the early sixties, producer Phil Spector created an influential and highly popular genre of rock and roll called the "wall of sound." His most historic tracks—60 songs, plus his masterpiece Christmas album—have been gathered by ABKCO into a four-CD (or four-cassette or five-LP) boxed set called *Phil Spector: Back to Mono (1958-1969)*. If you are throwing a party where you wish to induce aging baby-boomers to dance, this is a must purchase for your assemblage of party tapes.

Spector built his wall by layering sound upon sound with a generous amount of echo that added mystery to the power. The



melodies he usually entrusted to girl groups with little-girl voices, the foremost being the Ronettes. The lyrics, written by Spector himself or Brill Building stalwarts like Carole King and Gerry Goffin, lacked any hint of irony and were thus perfect to address adolescent longing in people of all ages. *Back to Mono* is particularly valuable because it does bring back the original mono sound, which has suffered in past reissues from ill-fated attempts to create stereo that just wasn't meant to be. It's also a delight to read Tom Wolfe's profile of Spector—one of the landmarks of the old New Journalism—in the accompanying booklet of lyrics. —C.M.Y.

PUNK IN PERSPECTIVE

Simultaneously invigorating and depressing, the legend of the Sex Pistols has been told and retold hundreds of times since they revolutionized rock and roll, in the late seventies. The best retelling is *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock* (St. Martin's Press), by Jon Savage, a veteran music journalist who was on the scene when it happened. He brings an immediacy to the aspects of punk that tabloids all over the world seized upon: the contempt for authority, the self-destruction, the deliberate offensiveness of the music. More important, he brings solid reporting and (finally) enough perspective to put the Pistols in historical and psychological context. Managed by Malcolm McLaren, an anarchist deeply influenced



The Sex Pistols in May, 1977

by the near revolution in Paris in the spring of 1968, the Pistols played the role of Dickensian street urchins terrorizing the music business and the English establishment. They were such good actors that they were dropped by three record companies and at one point were banned in almost every city in the United Kingdom (they have no equivalent of the First Amendment there). For a brief and hilarious moment, anything seemed possible. Then the moment drowned in an ocean of alcohol, heroin, and other drugs. If you've adopted the name Sid Vicious, it's impossible to stay alive and still be true to your reputation. Great social history of an era and subculture mostly ignored by historians with academic credentials. —C.M.Y.

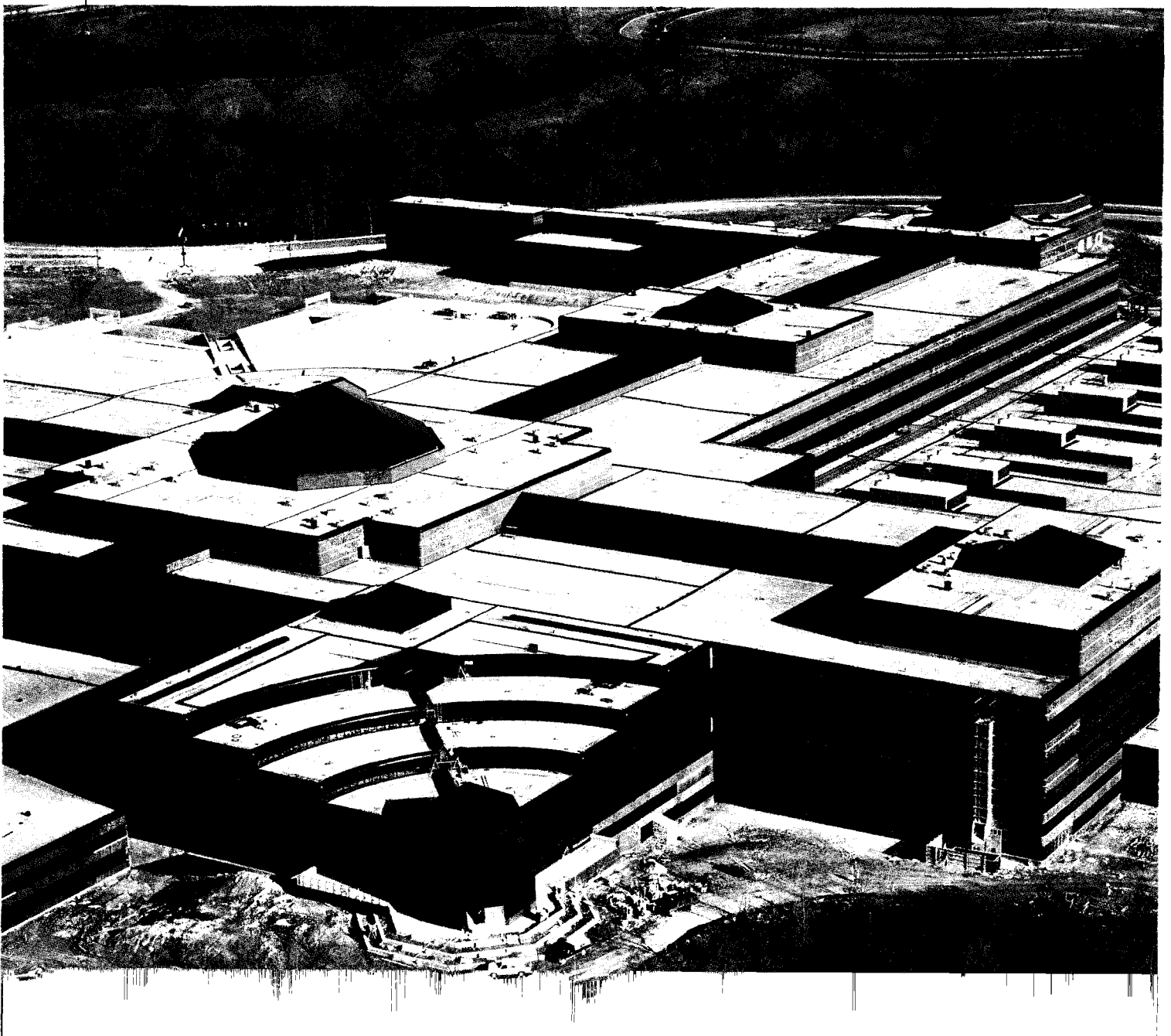
Charles M. Young is a contributing editor of *Musician* magazine.

Francis Davis is the author of *Outcats: American Jazz Composers, Instrumentalists, and Singers*.

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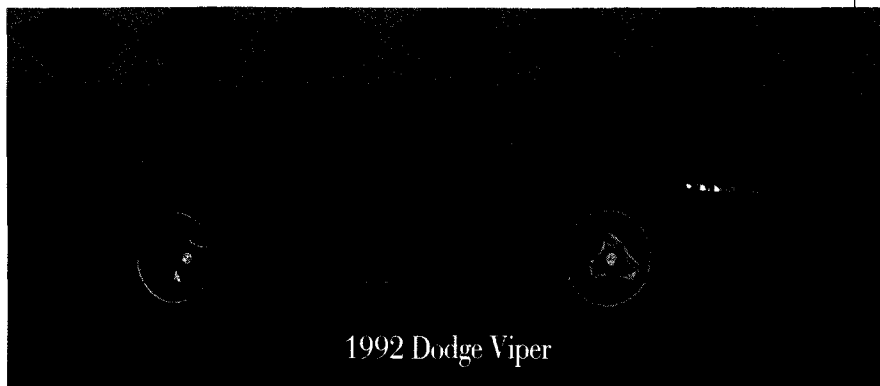
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FILM

by Ella Taylor

REAL-TO-REEL ADVENTURES



Thank You and Goodnight

Who could make an exciting documentary about meat-cutters? Barbara Kopple, who won an Academy Award for *Harlan County USA*, her 1977 film about Kentucky coal miners, richly deserves the second Oscar she won last year for *American Dream*, a sympathetic, intelligent documentary about the mid-1980s Hormel meat-packers' strike, in Austin, Minnesota. Kopple, a wonderfully unobtrusive listener and observer, draws out the betrayal felt by loyal employees whose families had worked for Hormel for generations; the devastating toll of the protracted strike on family and community; the bruising, futile struggles between local and national union officials. Though she's clearly with the strikers, Kopple is as quick to confront us with the crisis within the labor movement as she is to point up the hollow core of "benevolent" paternalism in company towns.

Two other documentaries being released this winter play imaginatively with the boundaries of the genre. Jan Oxenberg's funny and affecting first feature, *Thank You and Goodnight*, intercuts footage of her sick grandmother's last months with cardboard cutouts and dramatic reconstructions of her family history, punctuated by half-mocking questions about the meaning of life. In Dennis O'Rourke's "documentary fiction" *The Good Woman of Bangkok*, a 43-year-old divorced filmmaker (O'Rourke) travels to Thailand to make a film about the sex industry, and falls in love with Aoi (Yaowalak Chonchanakun), the Thai prostitute he's chosen as his subject. The film is as much a wry reflection on documentary "objectivity" as it is a stinging exposé of the use of women's bodies for profit. It's also unsettling for other reasons: watching Aoi being encouraged by the off-screen O'Rourke to bare her soul and her body for the camera, one wonders who exactly is doing the exploiting.



O'Rourke at work

NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE EXCESS

For those wishing to let off a little emotional steam, hyperbole's the word for some of the winter movie releases. That Queen of Feelings, Barbra Streisand, directs and stars in *The Prince of Tides* as a psychiatrist who practices some remarkably elastic therapeutic techniques on Nick Nolte in order to uncover a past packed with every variety of domestic abuse. If you prefer your melodramas hooked to politics, there's Oliver Stone's *JFK*, starring Kevin Costner; or to the underworld, try Lili Zanuck's *Rush* (based on Kim Wozencraft's novel), with Jason Patric and Jennifer Jason Leigh as stoned underworld narcs; or to the surreal, there's David Cronenberg's free adaptation of William S. Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*, with Peter Weller and Judy Davis. Steven Soder-

bergh follows his surprise hit *sex, lies, and videotape* with a paranoid-thriller reading of *Kafka*. Shot on location in Prague in black and white, the film stars Jeremy Irons in the title role, with Sir Alec Guinness as his boss and Theresa Russell, no less, as a radical who tries to draw Kafka into subversion. Spanish excess-meister Pedro Almodovar's new film, *High Heels*, stars Victoria Abril and Marissa Paredes as a reconciling mother and daughter who become embroiled in a hunt for the killer of the man they both love.



Almodovar's newest, *High Heels*

From France comes Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro's completely demented first feature, *Delicatessen*, a visually spectacular, Terry Gilliam-style macabre comedy about a bunch of weirdo slum-dwellers obsessed with meat and garbage.

TREASURE HUNTING

If you want to avoid boring your VCR with the usual round of recycled Hollywood blockbusters, head for an independent video store and cultivate a meaningful relationship with those who work there. They're always film buffs, and will pep up your jaded palate. At my own haunt, Videots of Santa Monica, a young woman led me to her favorite, an out-of-print copy of Otto Preminger's 1944 classic, *Laura*, starring the late Gene Tierney. The vintage section serves up a respectable helping of Ealing comedies such as the pricelessly antic *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951), with Sir Alec Guinness; and the late Michael Powell's feverishly over-the-top 1948 ballet film, *The Red Shoes*. Tucked away in the foreign-film section is some overlooked early Buñuel—*L'Age d'Or* (1930) and *Wuthering Heights* (1953). This being Los Angeles, the special-interest section sports *The Complete Guide to Channeling* (very dusty) and *Barbara Woodhouse Goes to Beverly Hills*, in which the British dog trainer is seen teaching canine etiquette to Zsa Zsa Gabor's hound (and its owner?).

Ella Taylor is a film critic for L.A. Weekly.



SHARING OPINIONS

Chrysler Corporation and its divisions, which provide this quarterly Arts & Entertainment Preview, are also proud sponsors of the *Arts & Entertainment Revue*. This is broadcast every Friday at 8 P.M. EST on the award-winning Arts & Entertainment Network, available on cable systems nationwide. For a chance to win a free year's subscription to the network's journal, the *Arts & Entertainment Magazine & Program Guide*, respond to the poll on the card in this section. The first 100 cards received will win.

Meanwhile, the results of the first A&E Poll continue to stream in. A question eliciting an eclectic response is "What is the most successful dramatization of a novel or short story you have ever seen?" The favorite to date is *Gone With the Wind*. Other oft-mentioned titles include *Brideshead Revisited*, *The Jewel in the Crown*, and David Lean's *Great Expectations*. Stay tuned for more results.



(Continued from page 26)

these assets had collapsed and they were virtually worthless. As a result, many regulators are urging that holdings be accounted for at current market values instead of their original cost.

Embarrassing discrepancies between audited financial statements and reality aren't confined to S&Ls. Professor Briloff, who has been sermonizing about the shortcomings of the accounting profession for a quarter century, warns that banks could be headed down the same path as the savings-and-loans; others fear that insurance companies could soon follow, and note that several carriers received clean audits shortly before they were declared insolvent by the regulators.

GIVEN THE costs of a system that fails to detect financial debacles in the making, why has so little been done in the way of reform? It hasn't been for a lack of trying by a few members of Congress. During the past six years Ron Wyden has sat through two dozen hearings on the subject, causing colleagues to question his sanity. Wyden has been pushing modest legislation that would require auditors to assess a company's internal financial controls and report uncorrected fraud directly to regulators. The bill would also provide legal protection to auditors who blow the whistle in good faith. But his efforts have been stymied by accounting trade groups and by corporate interests unwilling to bear the increased costs of audit reform.

Part of the reason for congressional inaction is the lack of public outrage. Because all but the biggest depositors are shielded from losses, and the cost of the thrift bailout is being shunted to future generations through deficit financing, there's no great pressure to act. Another factor is the sheer complexity of the issues. "Let's face it," Wyden says. "Members of Congress don't get up in the morning and say, 'Let's talk about GAAP and RAP.' This is complicated material, even to those who are very sophisticated."

Not to be overlooked is the power of the AICPA, which helped block Wyden's legislation for several years before acquiescing in the fall of 1990 to a modified version, which died in a conference committee. "The AICPA has fought this tooth and nail for years," a frustrated congressional aide says.

"They are powerful in a negative way. They tell members of Congress, 'This is a technical area. You do not know what you are doing.'" Bernard Z. Lee, the AICPA's deputy chairman for federal affairs and the head of its fifty-person Washington office, says he wishes the institute had the clout ascribed to it. Wyden's original bills didn't go anywhere, he says, because they had serious technical flaws.

Like many special interests, the AICPA backs up its lobbying with big money. Members of Congress know that opposing arcane accounting legislation isn't going to cost them any votes back home, but voting for it just might cost them several thousand dollars in campaign contributions from the AICPA's political-action committee. With little attention, the AICPA's Effective Legislation Committee has grown into one of the more well-heeled PACs on Capitol Hill. As the threat of federal regulation has increased, so has giving by the Effective Legislation Committee—from \$20,300 in the 1981–1982 election cycle to \$912,159 in 1987–1988. In the 1989–1990 cycle the AICPA's PAC gave \$1,087,044 to 176 Democrats and 141 Republicans, mainly powerful incumbents on committees with jurisdiction over banking, taxes, and commerce. This giving put the accountants' PAC in the top twenty. "That's the way the game is played," Lee says. "If the profession was going to be a player in Washington, it had to abide by the ground rules."

In a further effort to head off government regulation and address recurring problems, the AICPA has sponsored a series of commissions and task forces to examine financial-reporting issues. And congressional pressure in the mid-1970s led it to establish a complex peer-review and self-regulatory apparatus. Industry officials describe the self-regulatory process as working well; critics describe it as purely cosmetic, designed to give Congress the illusion that action is being taken to address the problems.

IN VIEW OF the spate of alleged audit failures during the 1980s, far more must be done to improve audit quality. Passage of Wyden's legislation would be a helpful first step that could make investors more aware of companies with sloppy internal controls and regulators more aware of potential fraud.

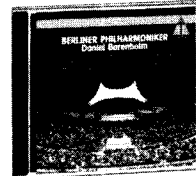
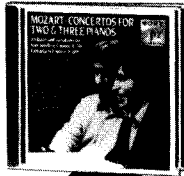
The measures have the strong support of the GAO's Bowsher, who spent a quarter century with Arthur Andersen. "Legislative action is clearly needed to further protect investors and our Nation's government," Bowsher wrote in a letter to Wyden last May.

Regardless of what Congress does, there is much the big accounting firms can do. During the 1980s accountants got caught up with the fast-money crowd. Greed overwhelmed caution as accounting became less of a profession and more of a business. Many auditors lost their fabled skepticism and profitably cloaked swindlers' scams in respectability. Now, for the public's best interest and their own, the firms need to look inward and rededicate themselves to professionalism and independence. To some degree this is already happening: a few billion dollars in lawsuits have a way of concentrating the mind. Firms have to select their clients more carefully, weeding out those with sloppy ethics and weak internal controls, especially companies that have fired their old auditors after disagreements. Auditors must refuse unrealistic deadlines that make it difficult to complete all the steps in an audit to their satisfaction.

In performing audits, auditors need to put substance before rules. They must recognize that the GAAP are designed to achieve a fair presentation of the facts, not provide a safe harbor for "creative accounting." Auditors must know the business they are examining, have the backbone to take tough stands with clients, and not let themselves get lost in a myriad of forms and procedural details. In many cases auditors discover the relevant facts but fail to interpret them correctly. They need to ask themselves whether the company's financial statement really makes sense. Is the client engaging in financial gimmickry? Are the transactions the equivalent of swapping two cats, each with a claimed value of \$500,000, for a \$1 million dog? Judge Sporkin suggests that advanced computer technology be used to eliminate some of the subjectivity in audits and to monitor a corporation's financial health continuously, in much the same way that the vital signs of hospitalized patients are observed. He also suggests creating an independent federal agency that would investigate financial debacles, in the way the National Transportation

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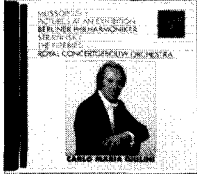
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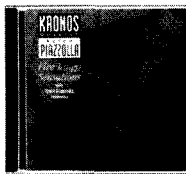
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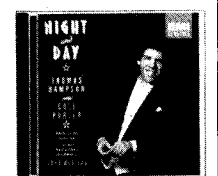
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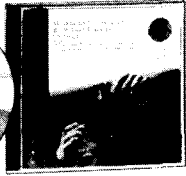
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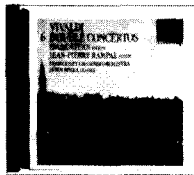
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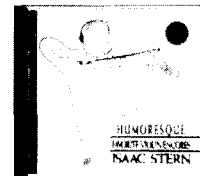
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Safety Board studies airplane crashes.

Ethics rules need to be tightened to promote independence. If the professional organizations won't do the tightening, the government should do it for them. In both the RepublicBank case and an earlier scandal, involving Penn Square Bank, auditors received loans under special circumstances from the institutions they were auditing. The AICPA's recent action to prohibit such loans was a welcome, if overdue, step. Moreover, the practice of changing sides—auditors' going to work for their clients—ought to be curbed with a cooling-off period, like the year during which former government employees are banned from lobbying their old agencies. Regulators should also have to wait a year before going to work for the firms they were regulating: an SEC study of auditors' independence got sidetracked early last year when the SEC's chief accountant, Edmund Coulson, took a job with Ernst & Young's national office, in New York.

To improve audit quality, firms need to do a better job of recruiting talented people and paying them competitively. Gary Previts, a professor of accountancy at Case Western Reserve University, in Cleveland, says the big firms have thinned in talent below the top ranks and haven't been paying the salaries needed to attract top business students. John C. Burton, an accounting professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Business, agrees that the profession is not competing effectively for the best people. In the 1960s and early 1970s about 16 percent of Columbia's MBA class went into public accounting, while today two or three percent go into management consulting with accounting firms and less than one percent into independent audit work, which is perceived as unglamorous and risky. In 1989, 45.8 percent of AICPA members were in public accounting, down from 54.1 percent in 1980.

American business and accounting leaders should stop mouthing platitudes about the U.S. system's being the best in the world and start taking some cues from overseas. The Bank of England, Great Britain's chief banking regulator, is authorized under a 1987

law to instruct banks to have the "reporting accountant" conduct any investigations or make any reports that the regulators consider necessary. It was at the request of the Bank of England that Price Waterhouse wrote a blistering report last June about its client BCCI. The report prompted authorities to seize many BCCI operations—and gave Price Waterhouse an initial spate of good publicity. The 1987 law also calls for three-way consultations among the Bank of England, the client, and the outside auditors at least once a year. In Canada banking regulators may review the public accountant's working papers, and two outside auditors must share responsibility for the audit, with one of the two being rotated every two years. In Japan auditors' fees are set by agreement between the Japanese Institute of CPAs and an association of manufacturers.

Most important, public accountants must have perceived and actual independence. Audit firms should refrain from providing other services for audit clients. Let them do consulting, computer-system design, headhunting, or interior decorating—but not for those companies with which they are supposed to have an arm's-length relationship. Leaders of the Big Six firms argue that offering a broad scope of services enhances audit quality and does not impair auditor objectivity. They are fond of stating that they

know of no case in which providing management-advisory services interfered with independence. Yet the AICPA's SEC Practice Section already restricts members from providing services such as executive recruitment and public-opinion polling for audit

clients—an acknowledgment that there is a perceived problem if not an actual one. At a minimum the SEC ought to reinstate a rule—repealed early in the Reagan Administration—requiring companies to report what other functions they were paying their auditors for.

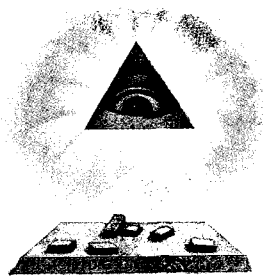
True independence also requires severing the direct financial tie between the auditor and the company being audited. That doesn't have to mean creating an army of government audi-

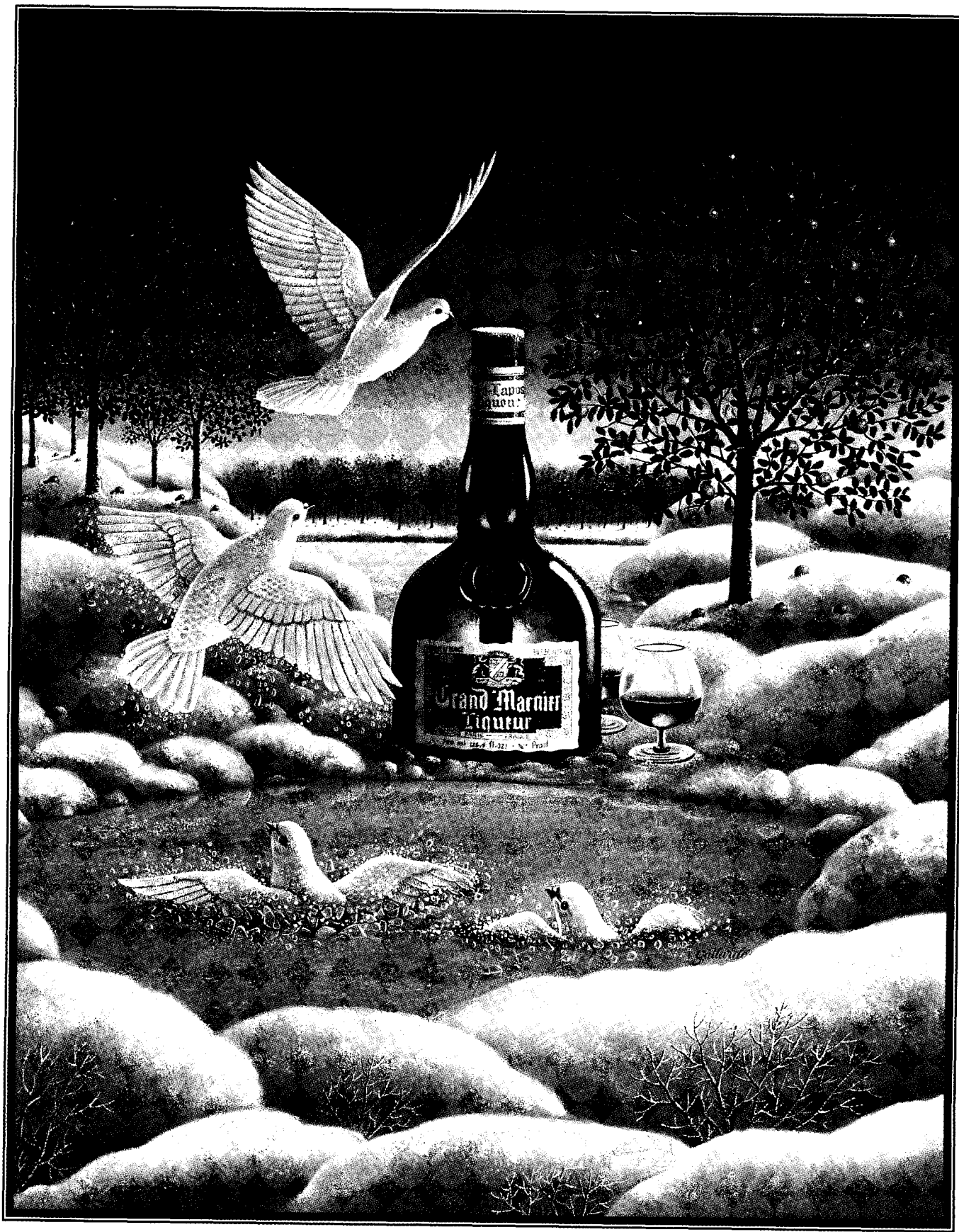
tors. Auditors could be paid from a general industry pool administered by a trustee and funded by the audited companies. This ought to be tried first for financial institutions that want to accept federally insured deposits, because of the huge risk to taxpayers' money. If the results are satisfactory, the reform could be expanded to include all companies that want to sell securities on public exchanges. The audits for companies seeking to make initial public offerings of stock ought to be commissioned by the SEC, because the current system gives accountants a vested interest in making the deal fly and papering over any potential problems.

Audits are, of course, just one part of the overall financial-reporting system. Corporate managers, directors, and audit committees still have the front-line responsibility for preparing financial statements. Standard-setters, government regulators, and educators also have major roles to play in restoring credibility to financial statements. The accounting firms can do only so much by themselves. They need help if they are to overcome the skewed system of incentives that leads to defective observation. Firms should be given legal and financial protection if they blow the whistle on clients, and companies should be banned from shopping for favorable accounting opinions. Accounting firms should be prohibited from offering below-cost audits to lure new clients.

Accounting and business groups will no doubt denounce most of these proposals as impractical and excessively expensive. But it is hard to imagine a system more flawed than the one now in place, a system that has undermined the very confidence it is supposed to engender, a system that has led to a jumble of rules, regulations, guidelines, and review organizations in an effort to prop up the unsupportable. With the price for the savings-and-loan bailout running into the hundreds of billions of dollars, and large commercial banks and insurance companies teetering, the cost of doing nothing would seem far greater. Unfortunately for some of the oldest and most prestigious names in the accounting profession, defending the status quo for so long has meant that their fates will be decided not in the marketplace but in the courtroom.

—William Sternberg

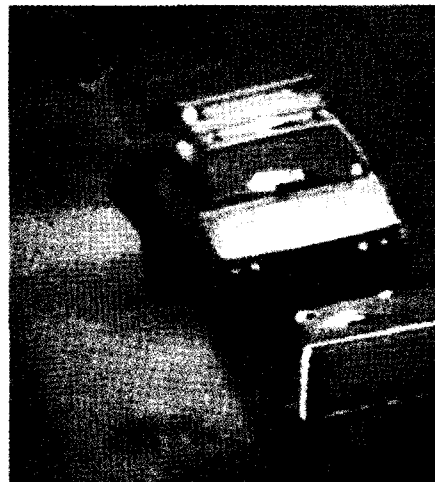
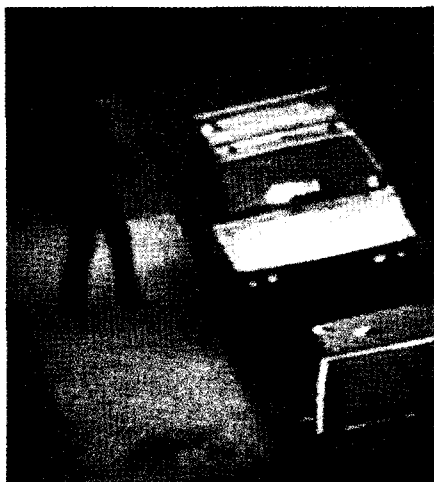




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A typical car break-in on a busy Manhattan street, filmed by a Fordham University psychologist who left bait in plain sight. In New York City such incidents occur perhaps a million times a year.

NEW YORK

No Radio

Any New Yorker who owns a car can count on having the car's radio stolen regularly. A repeat victim looks into where all those hot radios go

I KNOW HOW I am going to die. I will be walking toward my parked car on a Manhattan street and I will see someone breaking in to steal my radio. In a paroxysm of rage and vengeance, I will hurl myself upon him and be impaled on his screwdriver. Or maybe I'll trip and hit my head on the curb. I'm not certain of every detail. I only know that hundreds of thousands of car radios are stolen in New York City every year, and too many of them are mine. The most pathetic irony of my death will be that I died defending a radio that cost me only \$35. It was cheap because I bought it at a police auction after my previous radio was stolen. It was in the auction because it had been stolen from somebody else.

Let me take you on a tour of my car. There is a protective steel plate bolted over the trunk lock. I had the plate installed after somebody broke into the trunk and stole five baseball bats. Another thief has since attempted to break the new lock but succeeded only in reaming out the keyhole. It looks funny but it works.

My back seat is misshapen, its up-

right cushion bent over like a carsick passenger. It was ripped forward by a thief who crawled into my trunk to look for my \$35 radio. He had noticed the empty slot in the dashboard from which I had slid the radio for safekeeping. Many people with removable radios apparently stash them in the trunk. I had carried mine into a friend's apartment. So the joke was on the guy who destroyed my back seat. Ha ha.

He also destroyed the passenger door. To get into the car in the first place he had ripped out its lock. I have a new lock there now, with a protective steel plate.

There is a wadded-up paper towel, artfully arranged to look like a used tissue, in an open change compartment between the front bucket seats. I keep it there to conceal a small cache of quarters and bridge-toll tokens. I never leave anything in the car where anybody can see it. If I have something in the car that I want to protect but don't want to carry, I stop and transfer it to the trunk *before arriving at my destination*. It is crucial never to be seen putting something in a car trunk and walking away. I have had beach chairs stolen from the trunk, and breath mints stolen from the change compartment, and hideously ugly sunglasses (my designated expendable "car glasses") stolen from the glove compartment. I have had four radios stolen. Also dirty gym clothes. A friend once gave me Bob Dylan's *Biograph*, a three-cassette set. The tapes were stolen, one at a time, in three separate break-ins.

My experiences have been comparatively paltry. I have one friend whose

car was broken into monthly for five years. According to the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, in 1990 there were 55,314 reported thefts of motor-vehicle parts and accessories, including radios, in New York City and 66,691 thefts of other property from motor vehicles. National surveys show that about 25 percent of such crimes are reported to the police. I think it fair to assume that New Yorkers report such crimes at no more than half the national rate, since no sane person in New York City expects the police to recover a stolen radio. (Slightly fewer than 10 percent of all larcenies reported to New York City police in 1990 resulted in arrests.) That works out to at least 976,040 car break-ins annually, or close to one every thirty seconds, which is about how long the operation takes.

In 1981 a Fordham University social psychologist named Harold Takooshian set up a video camera on the Upper West Side and during fourteen weekend evenings observed eighty auto break-ins. Many of the thieves, he reported, would "cruise the parked cars until a valuable caught their eye, stop to tie a shoelace or lean on a fender until an opportune moment, then break in within ten to forty-five seconds, grab what they could in that time, stuff it inside a satchel and continue walking." Few bystanders intervened. Takooshian's experiment took place a few blocks from Riverside Drive, an even more popular spot among car-radio thieves, because it borders a dimly lit park. Rumor has it that they call the street "audio warehouse."

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I RECENTLY BEGAN to wonder where all the stolen radios go. I discovered I was not alone. "We have always wondered that," a spokesman for the Highway Loss Data Institute, an organization supported by the insurance industry which tabulates thefts of and from autos, told me. "We talked to people at the National Automobile Theft Bureau. One theory was that they were being converted into home stereos. We've heard they were being exported to Eastern Europe." Maybe they are being used for ballast in aircraft carriers. Or as doorstops in South American post offices. There are certainly enough stolen. Nationwide, the FBI reports, larceny is the most common crime, and theft from a vehicle is the most common kind of larceny.

Upon further inquiry I learned from police officers and prosecutors in New York City that most stolen radios enter a humdrum and depressing commerce. The thieves are drug addicts. They sell the radios for \$10 or \$20 to crooked radio stores and auto junkyards, which resell them to car owners, many of whom are replacing stolen radios. I visited a store in lower Manhattan where an entire wall was stacked high with car radios lacking manufacturers' boxes. Many were pull-out models, without the matching sleeves for the auto dashboard. My conviction that they were all stolen was briefly shaken when I noticed several Denon radios with consecutive six-digit serial numbers, suggesting that they had come from the manufacturer in a single batch. Then I noticed that the serial numbers, which were printed on shiny new stickers, continued without a break onto a row of Toshibas.

A bullet-headed salesman asked if he could help me. He was interrupted by an aggrieved young man with long black hair who was holding three \$20 bills, a Sony radio, and a sales slip from the cashier. "You said no tax," he protested. "I've got cash."

"Everybody pays tax," the salesman said.

"I only brought \$60."

The salesman took it, and the customer walked out carrying the Sony. No bag. No box. No warranty card. No incomprehensible instruction booklet.

"I'm looking for a car radio," I said.

The salesman looked me over and then led me across the room to a display of obviously new equipment. He

offered me a radio-CD player for \$350, "new, in the original box."

"What about those?" I asked, pointing to the opposite wall.

"Those," he said, "are demos."

I told Detective Michael Graziose, of the auto-crime division of the Organized Crime Control Bureau, what I had seen. He said that he sees stacks of radios, cut wires dangling from them, in auto salvage yards all the time. "I would stake my paycheck that they're all stolen, but there's no way I can prove it." Some have serial numbers, but car-radio manufacturers don't keep track of registered owners.

I asked if the police couldn't run a sting—send somebody in to sell "stolen" radios to a store or salvage yard and then bust the buyer. "If I went in and said, 'I got some radios to sell you,' the guy would be skeptical," Graziose said. "He doesn't know me. When you're from the area or you're a pawnbroker type, you can judge people. You see the kid bringing you a radio. He's eighteen, he's nineteen, his eyes are all strung out. You know."

Even a successful sting operation isn't worth the effort, Graziose said. "It'll drop down to a misdemeanor—attempt to criminally possess stolen property." Any jail time would be negligible. "It's hard enough getting any kind of time on felonies. The courts perceive it as a crime against property. It's just ridiculous." Last year there were 54,895 people in state prison. Five hundred and seventy-three were doing time for auto-related thefts.

Graziose sent me a police-department handout on deterring auto crime. It advised me to lock my door, to park in well-lighted areas, to mark my radio with invisible ink, and to pull out my radio and carry it.

I already do carry my radio, but that didn't stop the most recent thief from ransacking my car to look for it. Graziose hides his under his seat, putting a dummy cover over the empty slot so that it appears that no radio was installed. Such covers are available commercially, as are dummy slots with hanging cut wires that make it look as if your radio has already been stolen.

These may protect your radioless car, but if you carry your radio, "you are to some extent jeopardizing your own safety," says Professor Andrew Karmen, of New York City's John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Karmen is

a victimologist, which is a kind of criminologist, and he has had plenty of hands-on experience in his field. "I've been a burglary victim, a robbery victim, a car-theft victim, a car-break-in victim." He has been robbed at knife-point twice, once for the car radio he was carrying in a shopping bag.

Another way New Yorkers attempt to prevent damage to their cars, if not to themselves, is to leave their car doors unlocked, on the theory that anyone who wants to get in will, so you might as well make it possible for him to get in without breaking the lock (although this gives rise to the question Why does it matter if the lock gets broken if you're never going to use it?). This was the practice of Harold Taikooshian, the car-break-in videotaper, until, after suffering many break-ins himself, he gave up owning a car.

David Black, a novelist and television producer who lives on the Upper West Side, had a happier experience with this technique, although it required his adapting to a peculiar kind of urban symbiosis. He left his car unlocked and somebody began living in it. The car was always empty when he or his wife arrived to use it in the morning, but they knew they had a tenant because they found cigarette butts in the ashtrays, and the radio (which worked without the ignition key) was tuned to a salsa station that neither of them favored. The Blacks felt outraged and violated until they realized that their tenant was in effect serving as a night watchman. They left a pillow and a blanket for him in the back seat. Every morning the blanket was neatly folded.

Some manufacturers are addressing the radio-theft problem by offering radios that won't work if removed from their original vehicles or if a code is not punched in. I have seen a nifty Toyota model that is divided into two modules on the dashboard, separated by the heating controls. To deter thieves who turn up their noses at factory-installed radios ("aftermarket" audio components are generally considered superior), some car owners camouflage their Blaupunkts with Toyota faceplates. Doug Newcomb, the managing editor of *Car Audio and Electronics* magazine, told me about a radio with a detachable control panel. The rest of the radio is inoperable without it (unless the thief buys—or steals—a new control panel;

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most such radios have warning signs, and thieves usually know to believe them), and the panel is more convenient to carry than an entire radio. Newcomb, who lives in Los Angeles, was recently carrying his panel when he went for a ramble on the beach with his girlfriend, and it fell in the ocean, but this would probably happen less often in New York.

Andrew Karmen, the victimologist, believes that car radios should be made so that they are as difficult to rip out as they are to install. "You can pull them out with a screwdriver," he says. "But if you've ever put a radio in, you know they can't be put in easily. You have to lie on your back on the floor, and your wrists get contorted, and your feet stick out. No thief would ever do that." Karmen suggests that radios ought to be wedge-shaped, so that they can't be pulled through the dashboard, and that dashboards should be stronger. "Just as the car companies were required to make padded dashboards for safety, perhaps they could be required to make armored dashboards for security."

Karmen also thinks that the police should do more than they now do (which in New York City isn't much) to crack down on stores that buy and resell stolen radios. Most radio thieves who are caught are caught by patrol officers, who are not authorized or equipped to use them as undercover agents to trap fences. Detectives have other things to do, like catch murderers.

Individual radio thieves are, however, being prosecuted with vigor, says Paul Shechtman, an assistant district attorney for Manhattan. "We've gotten more forceful in our advocacy," he says, "maybe because every ADA [assistant district attorney] has had his radio stolen." Until a year or two ago many prosecutions faltered because victims failed to show up to sign the required affidavits stating that the thieves did not have the owners' permission to break into their cars and steal their radios. Now car owners are encouraged to file their affidavits by fax; the district attorney will even reimburse them for their fax fees. Faxes have poured in from as far away as Bangkok, and most prosecutions proceed.

"We tend to get reasonable sentences," Shechtman says. "I suppose they may not be reasonable by the standards of the rest of the Western

world. That someone convicted for the twelfth time of stealing car radios gets five months would probably give people in other jurisdictions pause. But in New York City that's a good sentence."

Part of the problem is that stealing a car radio worth less than \$1,000 is a misdemeanor (petty larceny), and breaking into a car is generally prosecuted as a misdemeanor (criminal mischief in the fourth degree), and New York State has no applicable recidivist misdemeanor law of the kind that in some states mandates longer sentences for repeat offenders. First offenders in New York City are commonly sentenced to the time served between their arrest and their appearance in court, which may ruin their weekend. Multiple offenders with multi-month sentences generally serve only two thirds of their pronounced terms. Then they go back to their regular line of work. "They get caught once a year, do two and a half months," Shechtman says. "It's still a living."

SO THE CAR-radio owners of New York City are largely left to their own devices—locking their doors, unlocking their doors, installing dummy faceplates, schlepping their radios into movies and restaurants, braving knife-wielding muggers trying to take their radios from them. I have heard of owners installing booby traps—flesh-slicing razor wire waiting in ambush behind the radio, pain-generating sirens, concussion grenades connected to dashboards—but I have not managed to find any of these people. What I have found, repeatedly, is evidence that owners have given up entirely on any kind of resistance to thieves. So they beg.

I am referring, of course, to the signs that on many Manhattan blocks are more common than dog turds. Posted in car windows, hand-lettered or commercially produced, they read NO RADIO IN CAR OR TRUNK. Or DOORS OPEN. NO RADIO. Or NO VALUABLES IN CAR. EVERYTHING STOLEN. Or NO RADIO. NOTHING. NADA. TRUNK IS EMPTY. What does it say about a civilization when citizens post plaintive notes asking criminals not to rob them?

"It's terrible," Detective Graziose says. "I would never do that. I'd feel like I'm bowing down to criminals."

Well, yes, but does it work? No, he says. "If I was a thief, I would look in

the car and trunk anyway. It only takes a second. I wouldn't listen to what a sign said." Maybe, says Professor Karmen, the victimologist. "It is a rational thing to try to reason with offenders. I've minimized damage to myself in two robberies by talking to the offenders." Yes, says Professor Robert McCrie, also of John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "There is research showing that signs reduce crime." He referred me to a study conducted for the Southland Corporation, the owner of 7-Eleven convenience stores, which are prime robbery targets. Sixty stores followed an experimental anti-robbery regimen, including the posting of signs that said REGISTER HAS LESS THAN \$35 and WE APPRECIATE EXACT CHANGE, and they were robbed less frequently than stores in a control group. But the low-robbery stores also changed their lighting and layouts.

Nobody knows if NO RADIO signs work. A lot of car owners seem to think they do, or they figure they have nothing to lose by trying them—except their dignity as citizens of a civilized nation. Which, along with seventy-five bucks, will get your smashed wing window replaced in Manhattan.

The origin of the NO RADIO sign is shrouded in the mists of the early Reagan era, but in the absence of any confirmed inventor one could point to a seventy-two-year-old native of Argentina named Naum Feldchtein, who immigrated to the United States in 1948 and eventually found himself in the car-tchotchke business. He owns a company called Kings International, which markets flag decals for cars, and "car badges" (metal ornaments that attach to car grilles), and key chains, and yellow plastic signs that stick to car windows with suction cups. I called on him in his crowded showroom in a narrow commercial building on West 19th Street. I perused the ranks of flag decals for Zambia, Vietnam, Vanuatu, the Netherlands (or, if you prefer, "Nederland"; both versions are available). I saw decals proclaiming GOD BLESS AMERICA and JESUS ES AMOR and two diamond-shaped plastic signs: NO RADIO and NO RADIO. ALREADY STOLEN.

"It was ten years ago," Feldchtein said. "I had a BMW. The radio was stolen three times, four times. After third time I got fed up. I was so angry they break the windows of my car." He

made a sign with black stick-on letters on white cardboard. It said SORRY, NO RADIO. ALREADY STOLEN.

"He was apologizing to the thief," interrupted Feldchtein's wife, Sarita, as she hung up the phone after getting the price on a batch of Puerto Rican flags on sticks.

"Yes," Feldchtein said, "because if they get nasty, they break your window."

"They break it anyway," Sarita Feldchtein said.

"I saw people looking at the sign," Feldchtein resumed. "They all laughed. Not mean. Sympathetic. They asked where they could get it. I thought, Why not get it printed? I'm not trying to pin a medal on me, but that's how started the whole thing."

The signs sold briskly in New York, and the Feldchteins exported them to Argentina, Colombia, and Venezuela. "That's the good thing about that sign," Feldchtein said. "*No radio* is also Spanish." Now his export business is dead, because South Americans have started to make the signs themselves ("You're not talking here a carburetor; that is not so easy to manufacture"). Locally sales have dipped to 5,000 a year.

"Things go in cycles," Feldchtein said.

"Everything goes in a cycle," his wife said.

"Remember the waving hand on the suction cup?" he asked. "We sold fifty thousand a week. Now I couldn't sell one."

"It will come back," she said.

The Feldchteins offered me a NO RADIO sign, but I didn't take it. It seems to me creepily intimate to enter into a conversation, even on yellow plastic, with people who are thinking of breaking into my car. For one thing, they might answer back: there are stories, perhaps apocryphal, of car owners posting NO RADIO signs and returning to find their windows smashed and a scrawled message: "Just checking," or "Get one!"

Of course, things could be worse. Paul Shechtman, the assistant district attorney, told me that his car was recently stolen. All he salvaged was his radio, which he had removed and carried inside with him. Now he's thinking of putting it on the curb with a sign: NO CAR.

—Edward Zuckerman



A CREW WITH A VIEW

They're The McLaughlin Group. Each with a view that's contentious and contagious. (Clockwise from left) Jack Germond, Eleanor Clift, John McLaughlin, Fred Barnes, Morton Kondracke, and Pat Buchanan.

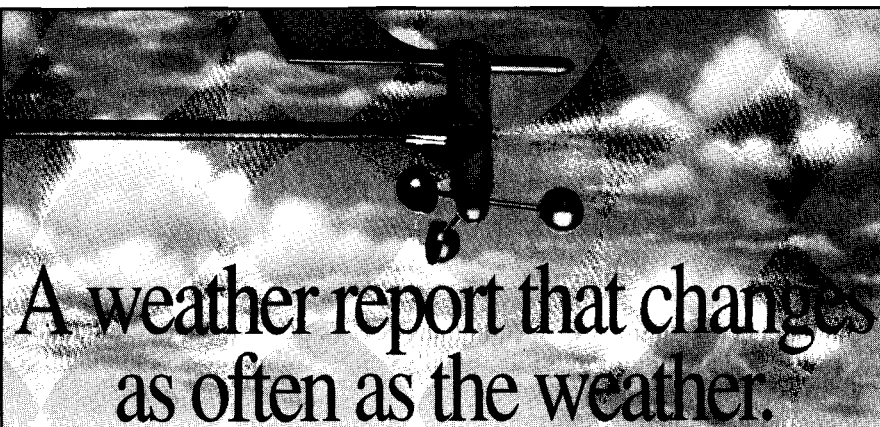
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RUMS OF PUERTO RICO

Because the government doesn't have the means to preserve endangered species, let alone a coherent plan, its decisions are haphazard—and private landowners often find themselves paying for the preservation of species they've never heard of

THE BUTTERFLY PROBLEM

BY CHARLES C. MANN AND
MARK L. PLUMMER

RICHARD SCHROEDER WAS FIVE WHEN HE MOVED INTO THE NEW HOUSE. IT had a big back yard that opened up into the tall grass of the dunes—his own private slice of the Oregon coast. He played there almost every day until he was ten or eleven. Then his father began taking him to play golf. Richard loved the game, and was soon working as a caddy at the country club. In college he won several regional amateur tournaments. After graduation he went into the securities business, but he still played whenever he could. And he kept thinking about the land behind his parents' house. The rippling dunes, the smell of the surf—he could

create a world-class golf course, eighteen holes as good as Pebble Beach, right there in Gearhart, Oregon. People would come from thousands of miles away just to play on his course.

Dropping out of securities, he spent the mid-1970s working as a club pro, learning the golf trade. He also learned the development business. For the scheme to be profitable, the course had to be built in conjunction with a destination resort—a mixture of hotel and residential space. Schroeder was looking at a \$100 million project. The acreage was split into a dozen parcels, each with a separate owner. Schroeder got them all behind the scheme and found a backer who would build it and a famous golf-course designer who would lay it out. All this took ten years—a long time, but Schroeder knew that dreams do not come true easily. Only in 1986, he says, did he learn about the “butterfly problem.”

Schroeder was hardly planning to build on pristine wilderness. Part of the site is fenced off for cow pasture; the rest, to his annoyance, is strewn with beer cans and the tracks of four-wheel-drive vehicles. But the land is also one of the few remaining habitats for the rare Oregon silverspot butterfly (*Speyeria zerene hippolyta*). A finger-sized



reddish-brown insect, *S.z. hippolyta* is registered as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, which directs the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a branch of the Department of the Interior, to maintain a list of species that are either endangered (in imminent peril of becoming extinct) or threatened (likely to become endangered in the near future) and to fine or imprison people who “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect” species on the list. Fines, jail—all at once Schroeder was in different terri-

tory. In addition to the usual obstacles facing developers (lawsuits, permits, bonding agents), he would now have to guarantee that his golf course could be built without killing a single Oregon silverspot butterfly.

The Endangered Species Act first gained notoriety in 1978, when the Supreme Court stopped work on an almost finished dam in Tennessee because it menaced a little-known fish. Since then the act has reached its long fingers into many aspects of American life. The Fish and Wildlife Service has forced the cancellation of one dam, in Colorado, because it put whooping cranes at risk; pushed the Bureau of Reclamation to postpone expanding another, because it jeopardized the humpbacked

chub; induced Massachusetts to close beaches just north of Boston at the height of summer, to protect the piping plover; started a lengthy political battle by proposing to settle packs of gray wolves in western states; sent a warning to 600 landowners in Polk and Highlands counties, Florida, spelling out the consequences if the development of their property harms the Florida scrub jay; and hauled the town of Rancho Palos Verdes, California, into criminal court for inadvertently driving the endangered Palos Verdes butterfly into apparent extinction, in part by turning one of its major breeding grounds into a baseball field (the suit was thrown out on a technicality).

None of this comes cheap. Buying land for the Mississippi sandhill crane has cost more than \$20 million. Riverside County, California, is spending an equal sum on the Stephens' kangaroo rat, and would have authorized an additional \$100 million had voters not rejected the idea. Voters will not get the chance to refuse in the Pacific Northwest, where the Fish and Wildlife Service plans to save the northern spotted owl, a native of forests in Washington, Oregon, and California, by halting most logging on 8.2 million acres, an area nearly the size of Massachusetts and Connecticut combined. Some estimates of the cost of locking up the timber reach into the tens of billions of dollars. In the case of the California gnat-catcher, now proposed for the endangered-species list, the costs may rise even higher, for the bird lives in Los Angeles, and efforts to save it will require clamping down on the most powerful real-estate market in the nation.

Richard Schroeder worked diligently to accommodate *S.x. hippolyta*. He met with the silverspot recovery team, the group of scientists and Fish and Wildlife Service staffers in charge of the butterfly's future. He hired the world's expert on the insect, Paul Hammond, of Oregon State University, to put together an official lepidopterist-certified conservation plan for the Fish and Wildlife Service. But all came to naught. Last March, Hammond found an additional patch of butterfly habitat. Exasperated, Schroeder's financial backers pulled the plug—it seemed they would never know where the butterfly might turn up next. When we visited Schroeder last summer, he was a deeply frustrated man. "The whole thing's crazy," he said, shaking his head. He seemed to be trying to control his anger. Society had chosen an insect over the dream of a human being, and for the life of him Schroeder couldn't see the logic in it, or how anyone was better off for it.

The Noah Principle

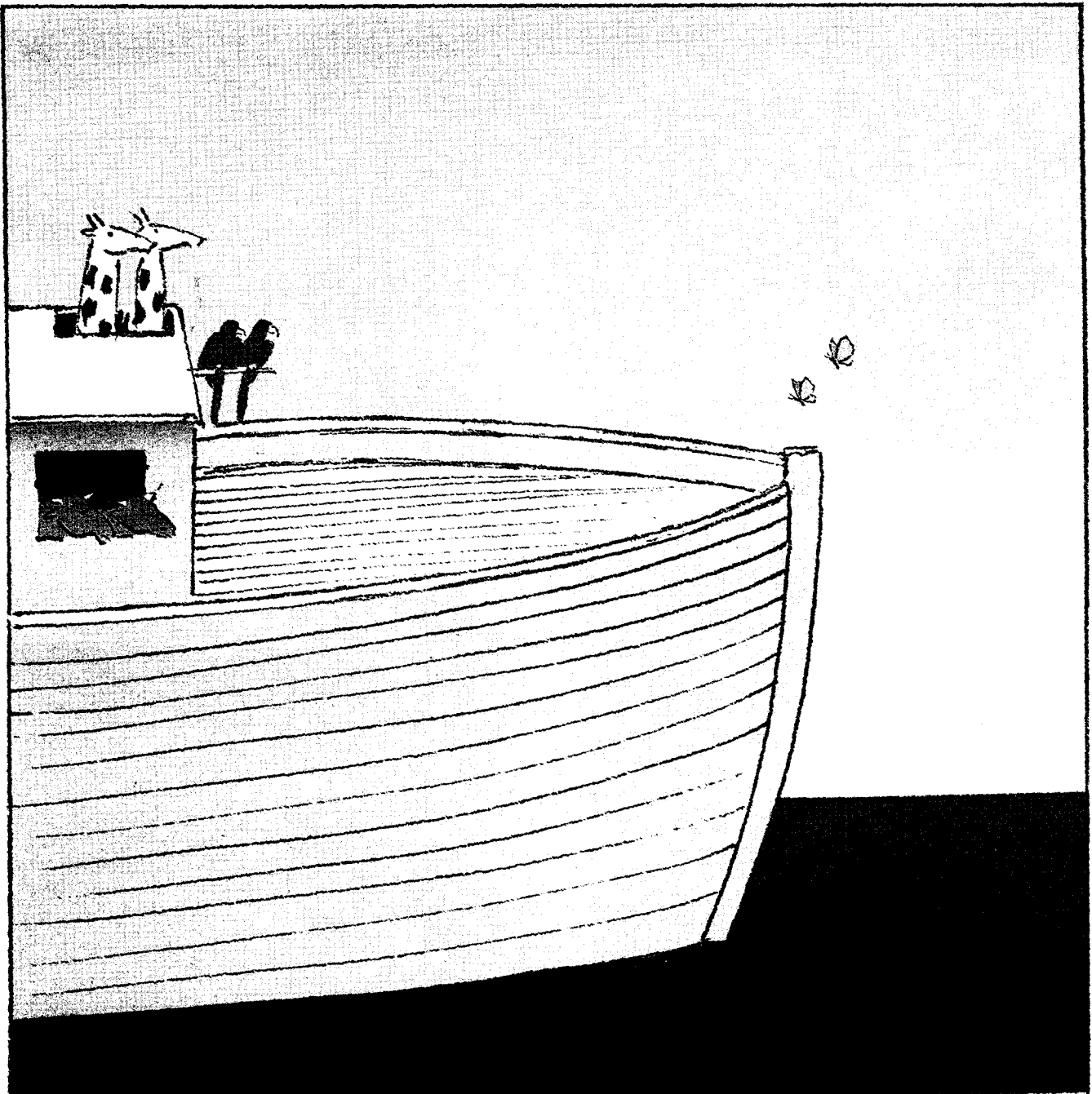
THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT IS UP FOR reauthorization this year, and tales like Schroeder's are why a political brawl has already begun. Most Americans would be appalled if a shopping center wiped out the last bald eagle. And it is likely that they would be dismayed to learn the

fate of the obscure Tecopa pupfish, which lost its sole habitat, a hot springs in Death Valley, to a bathhouse that could easily have been redesigned to save the fish. Instead, it became the first species to be removed from the endangered list by reason of extinction. But feelings are much less certain when it comes to canceling a \$100 million golf course to save a bug nobody has ever heard of.

Perhaps fifty silverspots live on the land for Schroeder's project. How can anyone imagine that they are worth keeping in place of a multimillion-dollar resort? On the other hand, how can anyone sanction the elimination of a species from this earth to profit a few people? Would the decision be different if the land housed five insects, rather than fifty? Or if it held not butterflies but bald eagles? What if chemicals within butterflies turn out to have medical benefits, whereas eagles are useful only as a national symbol? And what if saving the eagle required canceling not one but ten resorts?

Until recent decades Americans were untroubled by such questions. The nation was still empty. It didn't seem possible that preserving a few animals could impose real hardship. There seemed no need to choose between a species and economic growth. But now the country's empty corners are filling up, and biologists warn that in the next decade or two the fate of thousands of species will be decided. In making those decisions, ordinary notions of balancing the benefits against the costs may seem inappropriate, inapplicable, or even immoral. Yet any time we decide that a course of action makes some entity "better off"—butterfly, golf-course builder, or society as a whole—we are perforce judging that whatever the benefits, they are greater than the costs. At present these decisions are governed by the Endangered Species Act. Unfortunately, the act fails to balance costs and benefits meaningfully. Indeed, it is put together in such a way that it explicitly avoids the terrible choices that must be faced.

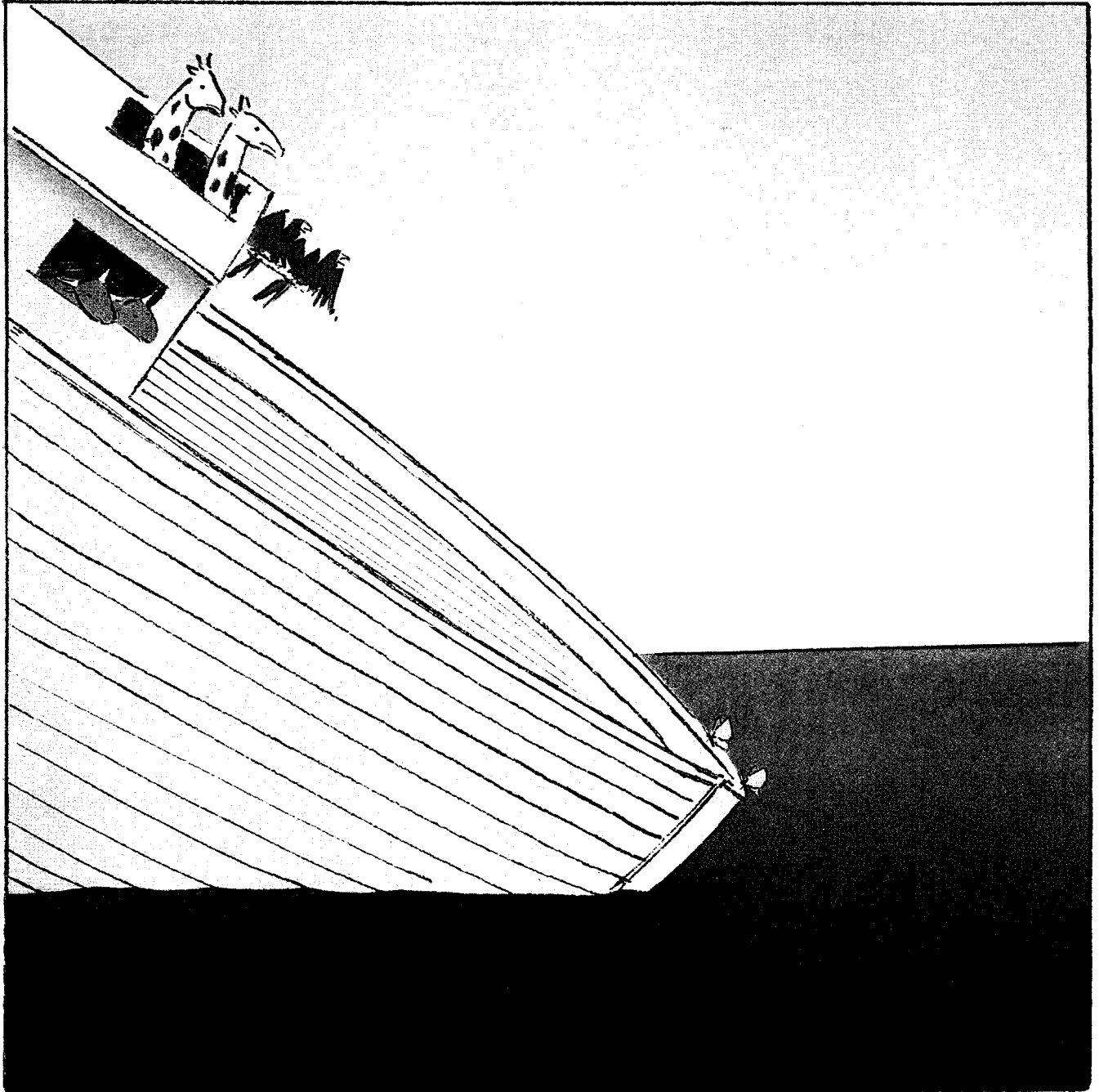
Federal wildlife-protection laws go back to the end of the past century, when a famous poacher named Ed Howell slaughtered bison in Yellowstone National Park with impunity because no statute forbade it; public outrage at Howell's cheeky remarks to the newspapers pushed Congress into passing the Yellowstone Park Protection Act of 1894. Other laws followed. Mostly aimed at poachers, they cost society little, and roused little opposition. In 1964 the Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife, the bureaucratic ancestor of today's Fish and Wildlife Service, compiled a "redbook" of sixty-three endangered species. Assembled informally by a panel of nine biologists, the redbook was the government's first endangered-species list. Laws passed in 1966 and 1969 directed the Department of the Interior to formalize the list and to protect the species on it by acquiring their habitats. These statutes were weak—they did not actually ban killing members of endangered species except in national wildlife refuges. When President Richard M. Nixon called for stringent legislation in 1972, the bid fell



on receptive ears. Congress passed the Endangered Species Act by a large majority in December of 1973, and Nixon quickly signed it. Neither seems to have had a clue about what they were setting in motion.

"They thought they were writing a law about saving bald eagles and elk—what I call the 'charismatic megafauna,'" says Dennis Murphy, the director of the Center for Conservation Biology at Stanford. "Instead, they got a law protecting *species*"—a difference with unexpected implications. According to Edward O. Wilson, a renowned entomologist at Harvard, there are only a few thousand types of the mammals and birds that people like to anthropomorphize, but there may be something

on the order of 100 million species, of which only about 1.4 million have been named. Creatures such as fungi, insects, and bacteria form the vast majority of this horde; mammals, birds, and other vertebrates are little but colorful epiphenomena. (Asked what years of research had taught him about God, J.B.S. Haldane, one of the founders of evolutionary biology, replied that the Creator had an "inordinate fondness for beetles.") Those not initiated into the ways of biological thought may equate "preserving global biodiversity" with saving whales and whooping cranes, but scientists who use the phrase are concerned with protecting organisms that most people wouldn't hesitate to step on.



Because the majority of species are unknown, no one can say with certainty how many are going extinct. Moreover, extinction itself is hard to observe—one can never be certain that a few specimens somewhere have not been overlooked. Thought for more than a decade to be extinct, the Shoshone pupfish, a cousin of the Tecopa pupfish, turned up in its native hot springs in 1986. The long-lost black-footed ferret was rediscovered accidentally a decade ago, when a ranch dog near Meeteetse, Wyoming, returned home with a dead one in its mouth; excited conservationists then found a small colony of the weasel-like creatures. But no one doubts that extinction occurs, and most biologists believe that it is now taking

place at an accelerating rate. Worldwide, Wilson guesses, the rate may be 50,000 species a year. Figures for the United States are surprisingly uncertain, but Peter Hoch, of the Missouri Botanical Garden, has calculated what he calls a “rough but defensible approximation”: some 4,000 domestic species are at risk of extinction within five to ten years.

Biologists advance three arguments for avoiding this prospect. On a utilitarian level, living creatures are the source of almost all foods and many medicines; wiping out even the humblest mold might deprive humanity of the genes for a future penicillin. Wilson has calculated that the genetic information encoded in the DNA from

the common mouse, if represented as ordinary-size letters, would almost fill the fifteen editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* printed since 1768. Who, conservationists ask, would like to see that information vanish, along with its potential benefit to humanity?

More generally, the web of species around us helps generate soil, regulate freshwater supplies, dispose of waste, and maintain the quality of the atmosphere. Pillaging nature to the point where it cannot perform these functions is dangerously foolish. Simple self-protection is thus a second motive for preserving biodiversity. When DDT was sprayed in Borneo, the biologists Paul and Anne Ehrlich relate in their book *Extinction* (1981), it killed all the houseflies. The gecko lizards that preyed on the flies ate their pesticide-filled corpses and died. House cats consumed the dying lizards; they died too. Rats descended on the villages, bringing bubonic plague. Incredibly, the housefly in this case was part of an intricate system that controlled human disease. To make up for its absence, the government was forced to parachute cats into the area.

These reasons for protecting biodiversity are practical and anthropocentric. But the "foremost argument for the preservation of all nonhuman species," the Ehrlichs argue in *Extinction*, is neither. It is the "religious" belief "that our fellow passengers on Spaceship Earth . . . have a right to exist." Far from being extreme, the "Noah Principle," as this argument was named by the biologist David Ehrenfeld, is shared by many scientists and conservationists. As a species, the Noah Principle says, the smallest grub has the same right to exist as the biggest whale; so does every species of cockroach, every species of stinging nettle (all plants are included in these arguments), and even the microorganisms that cause malaria and syphilis. Anthropologists refuse to categorize cultures as "higher" and "lower" civilizations, because all have intrinsic worth; biologists believe that there is no inherent difference in value between "higher" and "lower" organisms. All are precious, and human beings have a moral responsibility to each and every one. "It's a matter of stewardship," Wilson says.

The practical and moral costs of losing the nation's biological endowment may be enormous. But so may be the cost of saving it. To halt the spasm of extinction, Wilson and Paul Ehrlich wrote in a special biodiversity issue of *Science* last August,

the first step . . . would be to cease "developing" any more relatively undisturbed land. Every new shopping center built in the California chaparral, every hectare of tropical forest cut and burned, every swamp converted into a rice paddy or shrimp farm means less biodiversity. . . . [Even so,] ending direct human incursions into remaining relatively undisturbed habitats would be only a start. . . . The indispensable strategy for saving our fellow living creatures and ourselves in the long run is . . . to reduce the scale of human activities.

"To reduce the scale of human activities" implies telling people to make do with less: nations must choose between their natural heritage and the economic well-being of their citizens.

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT IS THIS COUNTRY'S response to that choice. It strongly favors preserving biodiversity—more strongly, conservationists say, than any other environmental law in the world. "Quite frankly," Murphy says, "it is the best weapon we have." It didn't start out that way. Indeed, few grasped the act's implications until its first test before the Supreme Court. On one side was the Tellico Dam, a Tennessee Valley Authority project frequently described as a boondoggle. On the other was the snail darter, a three-inch snail-eating fish that was first observed in 1973, six years after Tellico began construction and shortly before the act became law. Handed this unexpected weapon, Tellico's opponents petitioned the Fish and Wildlife Service to list the fish on an emergency basis in 1975. The amazed TVA complained that Tellico's environmental-impact statement had passed two federal court reviews, that \$50 million in taxpayers' money had already been spent, that the dam would provide flood control, hydroelectric power, and recreational facilities (a lake). It claimed that the snail darter was found elsewhere, and thus was not endangered. Nonetheless the service listed the darter, and a civil action ensued, based on the Endangered Species Act. By 1978 the suit had wound its way up the legal trellis to the Supreme Court.

Attorney General Griffin Bell personally argued the case, attempting to demonstrate the snail darter's insignificance by displaying one to the justices. The tactic failed. In June of 1978 the Court ruled that "the plain intent of Congress" was to stop extinction *no matter what the cost*. The language of the act, the Court said, "shows clearly that Congress viewed the value of endangered species as 'incalculable'—in practical terms, infinite. Obviously, a \$100 million dam was worth less than an infinitely valuable fish. Simple logic dictated halting Tellico.

The decision had a "bombshell impact on Capitol Hill," says Donald Barry, of the World Wildlife Fund, who was then a staff attorney in the solicitor's office of the Department of the Interior. Even some of the law's most ardent congressional supporters were alarmed by its inflexibility, although that inflexibility, of course, endeared the act to environmentalists. Tellico's principal sponsor, Senate minority leader Howard H. Baker, Jr., of Tennessee, set out to change the act. The ensuing political maneuvering led to the establishment of a small escape hatch: a committee that could be convened when all other attempts had failed to resolve conflicts between protecting a species and building a project requiring federal funds or permits. Because it included several Cabinet members, the committee could not be summoned every

time an endangered species was threatened. On the other hand, it could authorize the extinction of a species, as long as the benefits of the project strongly outweighed the benefits of actions aimed at saving the species. In its first meeting the "God Committee," as it was soon nicknamed, unanimously found in favor of the snail darter, though mostly because the group regarded Tellico as a waste of money.

Baker rammed through legislation exempting Tellico from the Endangered Species Act. The dam was built and, as predicted, proved to be less than an economic dynamo; a few years later more snail darters turned up in other rivers nearby. (The fish was downgraded to "threatened" in 1984.) But the whole affair set a pattern that has continued to the present. People who care little about the endangered species frequently invoke them as an excuse to stop projects; the science used to justify the actions of one side or another is often rushed, as it was for Tellico, and can be so incomplete that it verges on the fraudulent; and, most important, the law still insists that species must be saved no matter what the cost.

For the Fish and Wildlife Service, this set of circumstances has turned the Endangered Species Act into a bureaucratic horror. The agency, formerly a haven for guys who liked to work outdoors, is now a hot spot of sophisticated partisan arm-twisting. Hundreds of petitions flow in every year, and the service must evaluate them all, with litigious interest groups scrutinizing every move. Consequently, listing moves at a crawl. As of November, the most recent date for which official figures are available, 668 domestic species, more than half of which are plants and invertebrates, clung to their places on the list. Another 100 had been accepted for the list, but the service had not yet published a final notice about them in the *Federal Register*, the last step in listing. Some 500 species resided in a curious state of limbo called Category I: the Fish and Wildlife Service agreed that they merited listing but had not got around to accepting them officially. A further 3,000 occupied a second limbo, Category II: the service thought they might merit listing but had not yet investigated fully. At the current rate of progress, according to a 1990 report by the Department of the Interior's own Office of Inspector General, clearing today's backlog may take up to forty-

eight years, during which time many more species will be menaced. Already, several species have vanished while the government was trying to decide whether they were endangered.

After listing a species, the Fish and Wildlife Service puts together a "recovery plan" for it. And here, too, the agency is behind, though the reasons are as much budgetary as political. It has approved 364 recovery plans, covering about half the listed species, but few have been implemented. In its 1990 report the Office of Inspector General estimated the recovery cost for all species currently listed or expected to be at \$4.6 billion, spread over ten years. The service's 1990 budget for recovering spe-

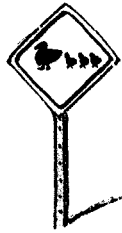
cies was \$10.6 million. Other agencies pitch in, but even so, in 1990 the total state and federal budget for all aspects of endangered species—listing, research, land acquisition, and so on—was just \$102 million, less than a fourth of the annual amount needed for recovery alone.

In reading these figures, one conclusion is inescapable: more species—many more—will be driven, like the Tecopa pupfish, to extinction. Few species are unsavable today; concerted human effort can save most of them. But we are unlikely to have the means to save them all. In this deficit-ridden age Fish and Wildlife Service budgets will not climb to the altitude necessary to save the few hundred species on the list, let alone the thousands upon thousands of unlisted species that biologists regard as endangered. Like cost-conscious Noahs, Americans will pick which creatures to bring with them and which to leave behind. The choice is inescapable—but the

Endangered Species Act, in its insistence that we save every species, implicitly rejects this responsibility. As a result, the government is left with little guidance. It moves almost at random, with dismaying consequences.

The Fall of a Sparrow

THE HEART OF THE LAST DUSKY SEASIDE SPARROW sits in a freezer in the genetics department of the University of Georgia. Orange Band (the bird was named for the colored identity band on its leg) had lived in captivity for seven years, much of the time in a cage at Walt Disney World. It died



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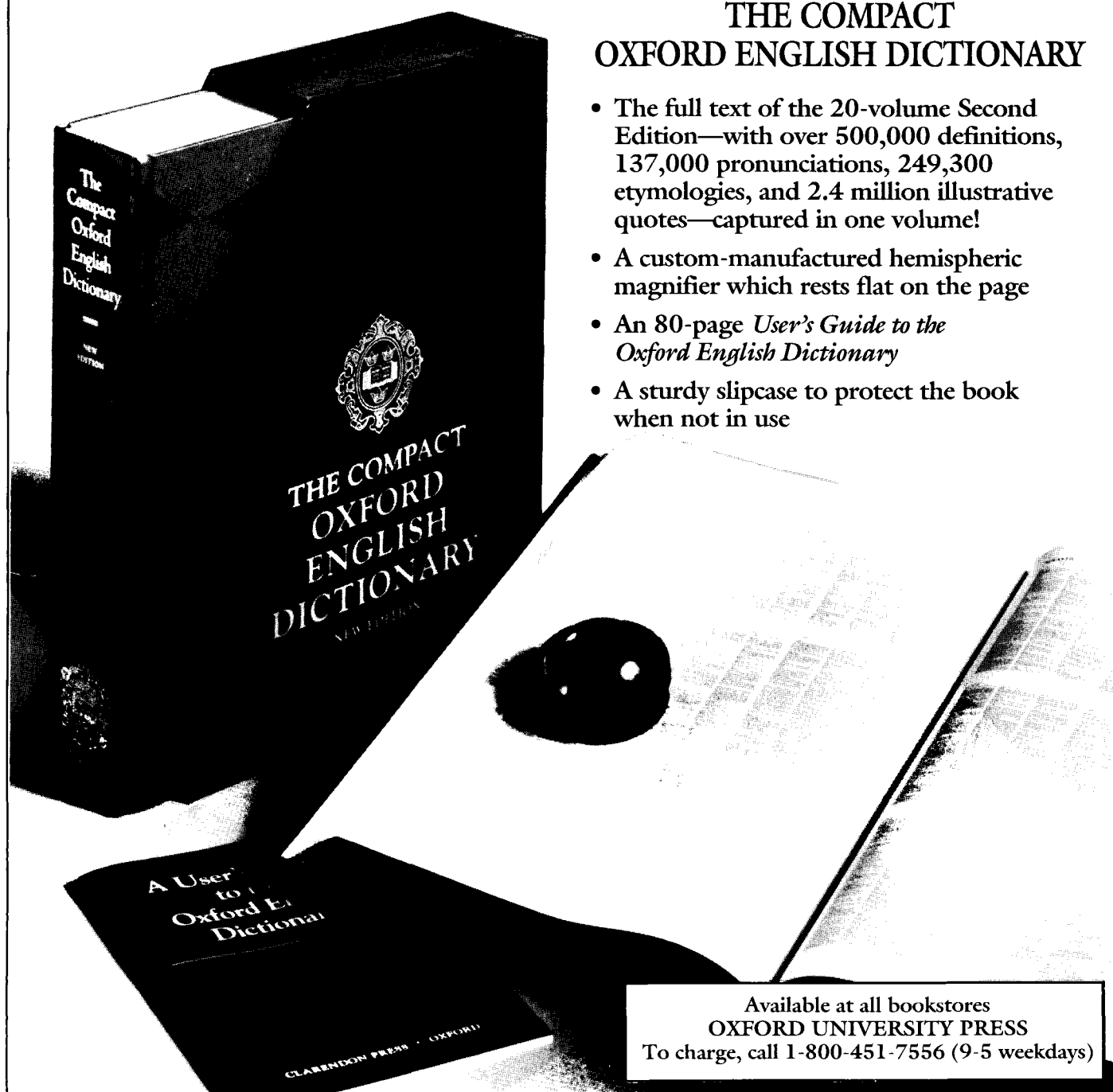
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on June 16, 1987, twenty years after the Fish and Wildlife Service included the dusky seaside sparrow on its first official endangered-species list. Orange Band's death, environmentalists said, was a signal failure of the Endangered Species Act. But it might be more accurate to say that the bird was a casualty of trying to follow the Noah Principle on a limited budget.

Knowing that it did not have the resources to save every species, the agency sought impartial scientific criteria that would enable it to focus its efforts on some species rather than others; politics and guesswork would be eliminated. From the beginning this goal proved elusive, and the sparrow's disappearance came at the end of a roller-coaster ride through the rankings.

Ammodramus maritima nigrescens, as scientists now refer to the dusky, was discovered in 1872. One of nine subspecies of the seaside sparrow (ornithologists dispute the exact number), the dusky was native to the complex waterlogged terrain of east central Florida. Scattered through this coastal area are brackish marshes that breed mosquitoes at a staggering rate—more than a million can spring from a square yard of mucky turf in a day. The marshes also bred dusky seaside sparrows. Less than six inches in size, their bellies streaked in black and white, duskies were finicky creatures; they nested only in patches of marsh grass that had no shrubs or trees in sight. Because this kind of open space is hard to come by, *A.m. nigrescens* had the smallest range of any North American bird: two bits of Brevard County, Florida. One was a few miles inland, near the St. Johns River; the other was offshore, on marshy Merritt Island.

This part of Florida first acquired renown in the late 1950s, when NASA bought Merritt Island and turned it into what is now called the John F. Kennedy Space Center. (Cape Canaveral is a point on the east side of the island.) Many daunting obstacles faced the country on its path to space, but one of the worst was the mosquito. "I was grilling hamburgers outdoors, and hordes of mosquitoes were landing on them to get the blood," recalls Herbert Kale, the vice-president for ornithology of the Florida Audubon Society, describing a visit to a piece of Florida wetland with no mosquito control. "You'd flip the meat and dozens of mosquitoes would burn up as they clung to it." Pesticides had become available in the 1940s, and Brevard County drenched itself with them until the mosquitoes became resistant. Switching tactics in 1955, the county sliced the marsh into large squares, built low walls around the edges, and waited for the pools to be filled up by rain, storm tides, and pumping. Because salt-marsh mosquitoes can't lay their eggs in standing fresh water, NASA employees were soon able to drive to work with the windows open. Bird watchers were thrilled too. The paddy-like pools attracted huge numbers of herons, egrets, and ducks. Allan Cruickshank, a well-known ornithologist who lived nearby, urged NASA to turn the northern part of its land, bought as a buffer

zone, into a wildlife refuge. The space agency was happy to oblige—it was never going to build on the land—and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge was born.

The refuge didn't help the dusky. DDT and other pesticides had shrunk the Merritt Island population, never large, by perhaps 70 percent; impounding the marsh reduced it further, because it killed the grass habitat that duskies required. By 1968, when, at Cruickshank's suggestion, a graduate student from the University of Wisconsin surveyed the refuge, no more than thirty-five males lived on the few hundred remaining acres of dusky habitat. (Females were much harder to spot, and researchers didn't try to count them.) Five years later only two males were left on Merritt Island.

On the mainland the second population was in trouble too. Ranchers drained the marshes with ditches, turning them into pasture. To provide green forage, they burned off the dead marsh grass. Several hundred duskies had managed to hang on, but the situation was desperate. *A.m. nigrescens* had support from bird watchers and scientists like Cruickshank and Kale. They lobbied the Jacksonville branch of the Fish and Wildlife Service, which in 1969 begged headquarters to buy out the ranchers, a measure that it said "could mean the difference between survival and extinction of a species."

The agency now had to decide what it was going to do about the dusky. Was it going to lead the bird onto the ark, or strand it ashore? The choice was not easy. In 1969 Congress had appropriated \$1.3 million for acquiring endangered-species habitat. Several thousand acres of Florida swamp would cost more than a million dollars. Spending that money on *A.m. nigrescens* would mean not spending it on other, equally desperate species. Should the Office of Endangered Species save the dusky and lose, say, the American alligator or the key deer? What Solomon could tell the agency which course to follow?

Absent biblical authority, C. Eugene Ruhr, the office's supervisor for domestic species, had to figure out the answer himself. He thought the decision could best be made by coming up with a coherent set of priorities. In 1971 he set down a method for ranking species, by giving them a numerical score in each of ten biological and economic categories. At the end Ruhr added the ten scores together; the higher the sum, the higher the priority awarded to that species.

Critics attacked the procedure as ridiculous. Because scores were subjective, the same species might be ranked differently by different people. Moreover, the plan suffered from what Lynn Llewellyn, a service officer, later called the "apples + oranges – grapes = fruit salad" problem. A species might receive a 50 in the population-change category and another 50 in the recovery-cost category. But nobody knew if one 50 should count as much as the other, and so the system was never fully applied.

Determined to produce a rational basis for making choices, Ruhr asked two migratory-bird specialists, How-

ard M. Wight and the aptly named Rollin Sparrowe, to come up with a less subjective one. In 1973 the two men created a plan that separated biological factors from non-biological factors, such as public interest in a species, creating two priority systems. In a test of the biological priority system, the highest score awarded—78.25 out of 100—went to the California condor. With a score of 61.75 the dusky was tied with the American peregrine falcon and the Mississippi sandhill crane. Its score would have been higher if the American Ornithologists' Union had not that year officially downgraded the bird from a full species to a mere subspecies. As a subspecies, the dusky ranked forty-second among the 180 species surveyed; as a species, it would almost certainly have ranked in the top twenty, and maybe Wight and Sparrowe would have placed it in the top ten.

Keith Schreiner, then the head of the Office of Endangered Species, was still dissatisfied. The Wight-Sparrowe system gave highest priority to species on the brink of oblivion, like the condor. These "basket cases" (Schreiner's term) were always expensive to resuscitate, which implied that the government would be spending all its money on species with little chance for success. Moreover, the system didn't take into account whether species were favored by powerful members of Congress. ("You had to allocate your resources in a way to avoid shutting off future monetary resources," Schreiner says, matter-of-factly.) In 1976 Schreiner asked another service biologist, David Marshall, to construct a third ranking system, this one directly taking into account that Capitol Hill was more likely to support what Marshall calls "glamour species" than "creepy-crawlies." Reluctant to endorse a policy that courted Congress at the expense of biological principles, Marshall nonetheless produced a scheme that added in political factors. His plan combined a biological score similar to that of Wight and Sparrowe with an ecopolitical score determined by the amount of "support" for a species inside and outside the scientific community. (Wight and Sparrowe kept the two scores separate, de-emphasizing the political.) In short, a species got a boost for doing well in a popularity contest.

This badly hurt the dusky. When the bird was downgraded to a subspecies, it lost an important ecopolitical constituency—bird watchers, who collect observations

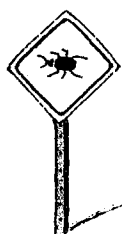
of species, rather than subspecies. The dusky plummeted to ninety-seventh place in the general rankings, far below the falcon, which rose to eighth place, and somewhat below the crane, which dropped to seventy-seventh.

The Fish and Wildlife Service paid little attention to the ups and downs of the bird's ranking. Even before Ruhr had written up his ranking system, it had decided to put much of its land-acquisition budget into buying dusky habitat. (We could find no one able to explain this decision.) By 1972 the agency had set up a second wildlife reserve in Brevard County, the St. Johns National Wildlife Refuge, on more than 2,000 acres of former ranchland. The price was \$787,000—almost a third of the agency's total land-acquisition expenditures for endangered species in that year. Over the next four years it spent almost a million dollars to add another 2,000 acres.

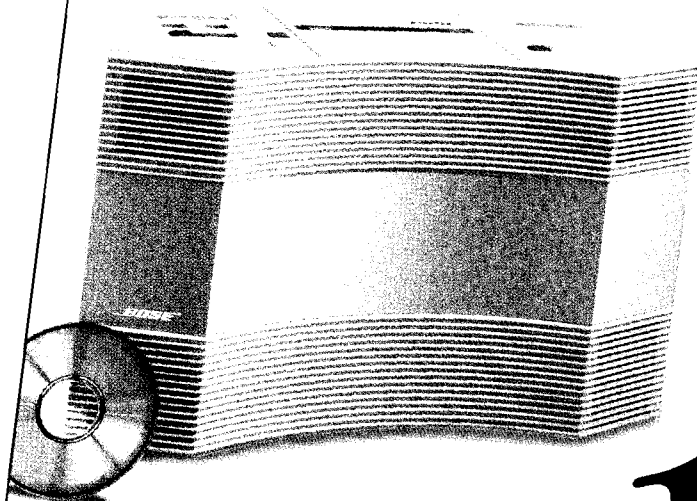
What happened next has been eloquently described by Mark Jerome Walters, a journalist whose book on the dusky's extinction, *A Shadow and a Song*, will be published this fall by Chelsea Green. Despite the high cost of acquiring dusky habitat, the service failed to take care of it. Specifically, it didn't plug a major drainage—a task that Walters says would have taken "a couple guys with shovels a couple of days." As a result, the land dried out further. Nearby ranchers continued to burn fields. In December of 1975 a pasture fire went out of control and burned three quarters of the refuge. Only eleven males survived.

The recovery team, of which Herbert Kale, the Brevard County ornithologist, was a member, had already urged the service to buy a second piece of habitat to the south, near a proposed extension of the Beeline Expressway (so called because it cuts straight across central Florida). The agency agreed; it bought 1,500 more acres for the dusky. But again, it did not fill in the ditches—it was still negotiating to buy a big ranch in the middle of the reserve, and could not legally cut off its drainage. By mid-1978 Washington had bought some 6,200 acres at a cost of \$2.6 million.

That summer the agency surveyed the dusky population. It found twenty-four males: four on the burned northern part of the refuge, twenty on the new southern part, and none on Merritt Island. On August 31 staffers in the Atlanta office met to discuss the bird's future. Costs, they believed, had to be balanced against benefits. In



**ASKED WHAT YEARS
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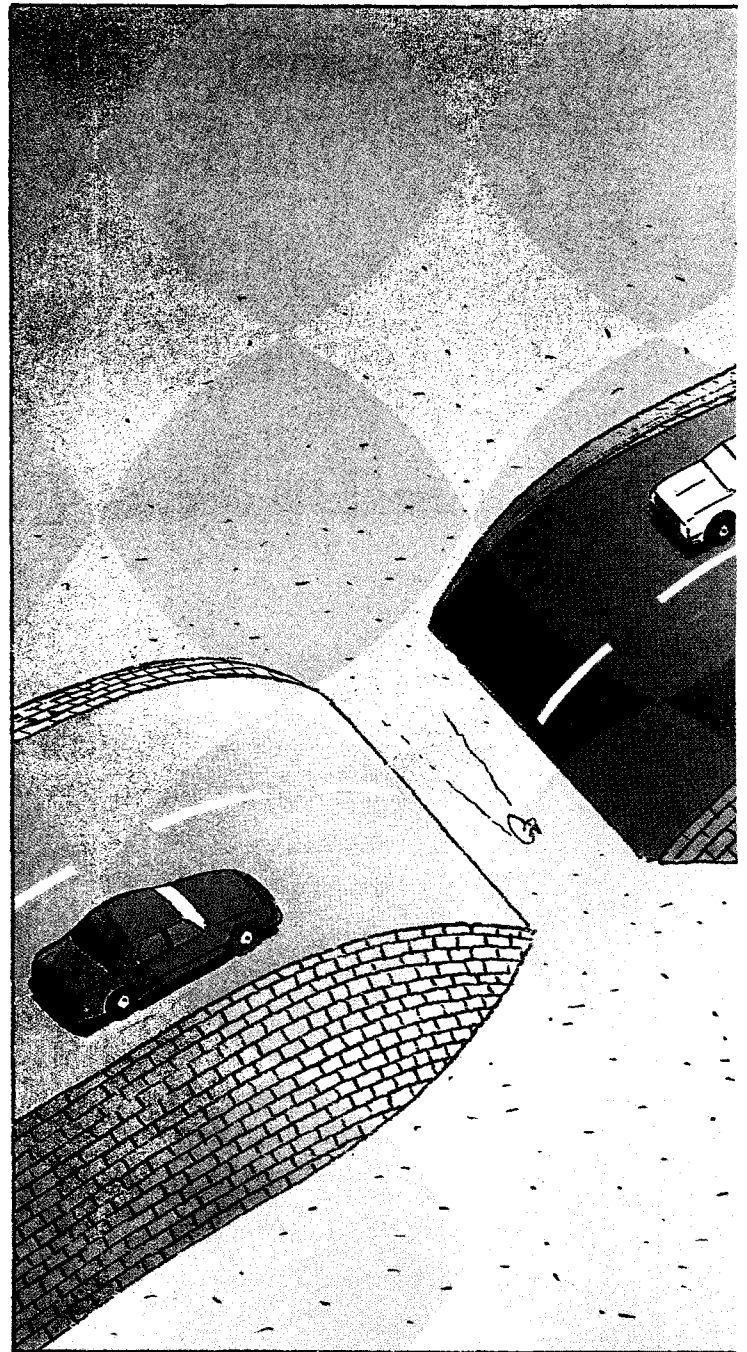
view of the small number of surviving birds, they asked Washington for permission to "hold the line on future land acquisition." The remaining dusky money, as much as a million dollars, could go to another endangered species, the American crocodile. Schreiner concurred. "We always went for the ones with the best chance of recovery with the least money," he told us recently. "It would have been senseless to commit a large sum of money to that species when other species could have used the money and actually survived." The service stopped negotiating to buy the last ranch, an act that effectively doomed the last wild population of *A.m. nigrescens*. Amazingly, the agency had a fourth priority system at the time—and in this one the dusky was placed in the fifth highest of forty possible recovery categories. (The St. Johns refuge still exists, its northern half a favorite landing spot for migratory birds, its southern half a testament to the effects of what Kale calls "benign neglect.")

Kale and Will Post, then a biologist at the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, suggested breeding the sparrow in captivity. No female duskies had been seen since 1976, but the bird still had a chance. If dusky males were bred to females of a related subspecies, the Scott's seaside sparrow (*A.m. peninsulae*), the chicks would be half dusky. Female hybrids could then be "back-crossed" to the dusky males, producing birds that were three-quarters dusky. The sixth generation would be 98.4 percent pure.

After requesting a legal opinion about the propriety of the program, the Fish and Wildlife Service allowed Kale to capture the last five wild birds in 1979 and 1980. The first generation of hybrids was healthy and fertile. Pleased, Kale asked for permission to continue—only to discover that the service had changed its mind. A new legal opinion said that the Endangered Species Act covered pure species only, and that federal money therefore could not be spent on hybrids. Despite an offer to fund the project privately, the service declared *A.m. nigrescens* off limits.

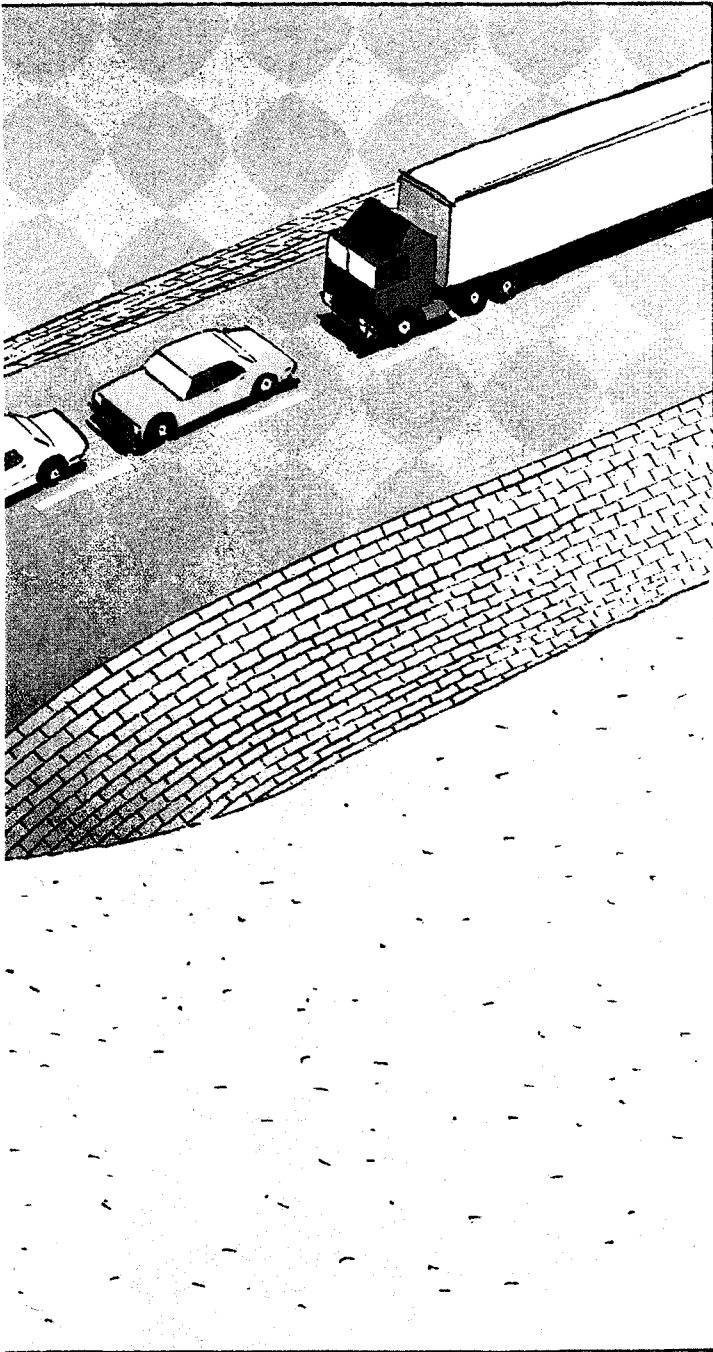
The stubborn Kale made his pitch again in 1983, this time working with curators at Walt Disney World's Discovery Island. With Mickey Mouse picking up the tab, taxpayers' funds would not be involved. In the meantime, Kale says, the service had been working on a similar back-crossing project for a more popular, "macho" bird, the peregrine falcon. Yet another legal opinion was issued by the agency's solicitor, and both the falcon and sparrow projects were allowed to proceed.

Nothing went right. One of the dusky males died of old age. Some of the female hybrids turned out, on closer inspection, to be males. The Scott's sparrows tended to die of unknown causes. One hybrid female was mated to three dusky males, ultimately building six nests and laying eleven eggs. Only one hatched. Many of the other pairs were incompatible. The males, Kale realized, were too old. He was bitter about the two-year delay caused by



the service's confusion over its hybrid policy. In a half-hearted fashion the breeding project continued at Disney World. Care of the hybrid birds was imprecise. They were killed by storms; they were killed by rats; some simply disappeared. The pure birds died, one by one, until only Orange Band was left.

Extinction was not the final blow. After Orange Band died, researchers at the University of Georgia analyzed part of the bird's genetic makeup. As best they could determine, Orange Band's DNA was almost identical to the DNA from other seaside sparrow subspecies. ("The last *A.m. nigrescens*," they wrote, "appears to have been a routine example of the Atlantic coast phylad of seaside spar-



row”—a conclusion that Kale hotly disputes.) If the bird was not even a separate subspecies, the service's extraordinary conservation effort had been misapplied.

Meanwhile, the service has continued to fumble over the question of which species to help into the ark. Its current priority system—the sixth, by our count—was adopted in 1983. Three factors are considered: the degree of threat faced by a species, its potential for successful recovery, and its taxonomic status (whether it has close genetic relatives). Recovery priorities rank from a high of 1 to a low of 18; species that are in conflict with land development are supposed to receive speedier treatment. Explicitly left out of consideration is the type of

species involved; despite the widespread perception that Congress prefers “glamour species,” it has officially instructed the Fish and Wildlife Service to award equal protection to “higher” and “lower” forms of life. The Oregon silverspot butterfly and Fassett's locoweed are thus supposed to be on equal terms with the bald eagle and the northern spotted owl, because they all have the same priority rank.

The ranking system does not set rules for deciding how much to spend on which species. Nonetheless, some correlation should exist between a species's recovery priority and what is spent on it. Unfortunately, none does, raising the specter of more duskies to come. *A.m. nigrescens* itself rated a 6 in the 1983 system, sharing that rank with thirty-eight other species, including the northeastern beach tiger beetle and the Florida panther. In 1990 the service spent not one penny to bolster the beetle's chances for survival; other federal agencies spent \$500. Meanwhile, the Florida panther, a “higher” life form, received \$3.8 million. The aberrations are by no means restricted to priority 6. Average expenditures for the eight species with a recovery priority of 1 were \$100,000 less than those for species with a priority of 6. The government lavished an average of \$53,200 on priority-15 species, but starved priority-4 species with an average per-species budget of \$5,500. More than half of the \$100 million that state and federal governments devoted to endangered species was awarded to eleven species—less than two percent of those on the list. A hundred and fourteen species received no money at all.

On average, the service spent more on subspecies than on full species, more on species with a low recovery potential than on those with a high recovery potential, and, despite congressional instructions to the contrary, fourteen times as much on “charismatic megafauna” as on other types of species. Perhaps most troubling, average federal and state disbursements are actually lower for endangered species than for threatened species. Two of the three most expensive species—the northern spotted owl (\$9.7 million, the highest single expenditure) and the grizzly bear (\$5.9 million)—are threatened, not endangered. (The third species, a bird called the least Bell's vireo, is endangered; it received \$9.2 million.)

Kale was still angry at the Fish and Wildlife Service when we spoke to him last fall. (He seemed as irate as Richard Schroeder.) The service, Kale said, had paid lots of money for habitat that it had not managed; it had then spent still more, only to decide that a final, key parcel of land was not worth the trouble. Even when somebody else was willing to pay, it had refused for several years to allow a last-ditch captive-breeding effort. The whole business, he thought, was senseless and sad. The service had made decisions, but in the most haphazard way, and everyone was the worse for it. He could remember going into the marshes in the 1950s and seeing duskies lined up singing in the grass by the road.



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ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS

The American Way

NEAR THE TOWN OF MIMA, IN SOUTHWESTERN Washington State, an acre of rich dark soil is stitched with neat rows of small plants. From a distance the field seems to be growing a thriving crop of carrots. But these plants will not find their way onto a dinner plate. The field and nine more acres nearby contain a million seedlings of a tree, the Pacific yew (*Taxus brevifolia*).

Ten acres of seedlings is not a large tract by the standards of its owner, the Weyerhaeuser Company, of Federal Way, Washington, which plants almost 280 million seedlings a year. Nonetheless, this tree farm has attracted extraordinary attention. The bark, needles, and roots of *T. brevifolia* contain taxol, a potential treatment for ovarian cancer. Resistant to chemotherapy, cancer of the ovary is one of the most intractable forms of the disease; it has an overall five-year survival rate of less than 40 percent. This single crop of yew seedlings could yield enough taxol to treat a large proportion of the 20,000 women who are stricken each year with ovarian cancer.

The discovery of taxol is exactly what Congress had in mind when it passed the Endangered Species Act. "Who knows, or can say," asked one congressional report on the act, "what potential cures for cancer or other scourges, present or future, may lie locked up in the structures of plants which may yet be undiscovered, much less analyzed?" But the yew is also an implicit rebuke to the means Congress chose to safeguard those potential cures. A few years ago *T. brevifolia* was treated as a weed, burned on the ground as slash whenever bigger and more valuable trees were cut down. It was not officially endangered or threatened, but its numbers were decreasing. Now the species is flourishing as never before, but the recovery occurred by means so far from the Fish and Wildlife Service that one cannot help wondering if orthodox governmental plans to save biodiversity are asking the right questions, let alone providing the right answers.

The yew's journey to salvation started in the late 1950s, when the National Cancer Institute began randomly testing the cancer-fighting potential of thousands—nobody knows the full number—of plants, bacteria, fungi, and molds. The procedure now followed by the NCI Developmental Therapeutics Program is complex in detail but simple in principle: Researchers grind up a small sample of an organism and administer it to cancer cells. If the cells react, the sample is separated into its chemical constituents, which are tested separately in a procedure analogous to sifting through a set of ever-finer sieves. According to Michael Grever, the associate director of the program, approximately one quarter of today's cancer drugs were discovered through such random screening, either by the NCI or by private drug firms. Taxol, the latest example, emerged from the NCI's program in 1971.

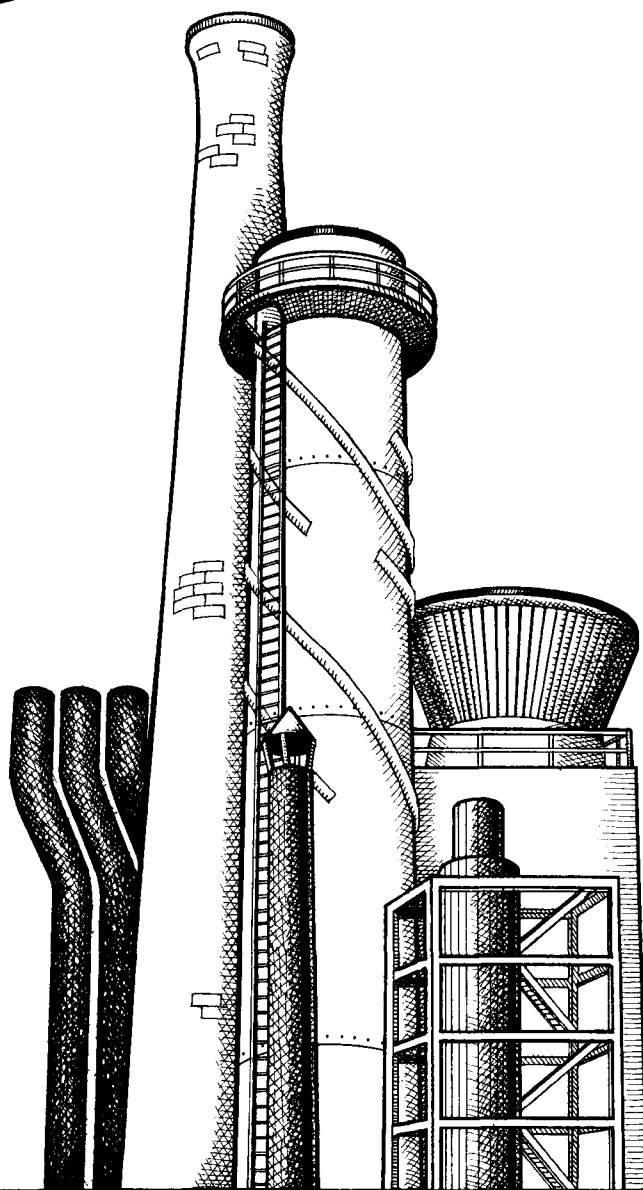
Testing the compound was no easy task. One mature tree's worth of bark—about forty pounds—yields one twentieth of an ounce of taxol, not enough to treat one patient. A big research push would require tons of bark. The first, small-scale clinical trials, in 1983, produced such severe allergic reactions that many had to be abandoned. Researchers resumed them after discovering that patients had probably reacted to the medium in which the taxol was administered—a form of castor oil—rather than to the drug itself. Subsequent results showed that taxol might have power over breast and lung cancer as well as ovarian cancer. The trials were small because taxol was so scarce. Nonetheless, NCI officials told reporters last June that the drug "may be one of the most important anticancer agents discovered in the past decade."

The prospect created almost as much fear as elation. The yew and its cousins have been revered since the Stone Age, when spears were hewn from their tough yet flexible wood. The finest English longbows were made from yew. Growing often in cemeteries, they developed gnarled roots that were supposed to wrap the dead. In contrast, the modern timber industry has had little use for the tree, because it grows too slowly; unable to produce big logs, the yew was cut down and not replanted. Only in old-growth forests have yews survived long enough to grow tall (for a yew, forty feet is tall) and accumulate a lot of bark. When the NCI issued a call for large-scale taxol research, in June of 1990, conservationists feared that continued clear-cutting would wipe out the yew—along with the taxol it contains—and the mighty forests it lives in. The Environmental Defense Fund called for changes in the way timber is sold; Jerry Rust, an Oregon county commissioner, formed a Native Yew Conservation Council; the Oregon Natural Resources Council threatened legal action to force the government to prospect for yew logs in old clear-cuts rather than relying on new ones. "The waste is appalling," says Wendell Wood, the conservation coordinator of the Oregon Natural Resources Council. "They're still burning countless yews on the slash pile. It's like Ollie North on the shredder. They're burning the evidence and denying the problem ever existed."

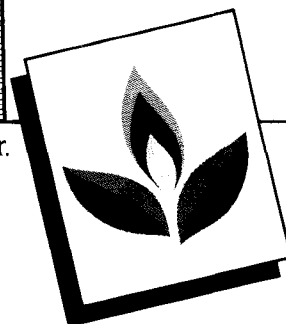
To satisfy the demand for taxol, yew logs are now being plucked out of old clear-cuts by single mothers, laid-off loggers, and surly countercultural leftovers who live in the woods and make their livelihood by picking brush for flower arrangers, herb specialists, and plant stores. Piled high with gunny sacks of yew bark, their battered pickup trucks line up outside the taxol-extraction plant in Cottage Grove, Oregon. The procedure seems innocent enough, but the conversation in the line on the day we visited would have alarmed Wendell Wood. The trucks had anti-corporate and anti-military bumper stickers. Despite these sentiments, the drivers joked about how they could drive into national forests and rustle some yews. "The bark's real loose," one man explained to us. "You

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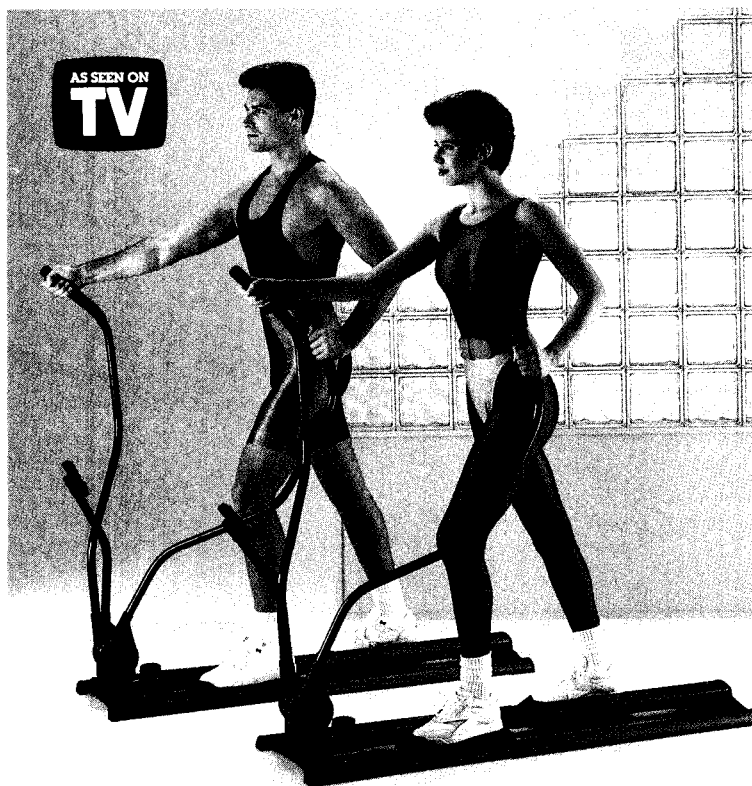
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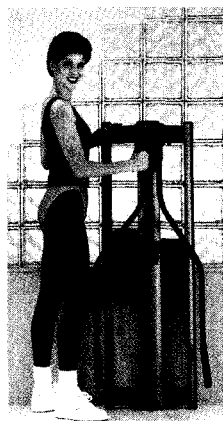
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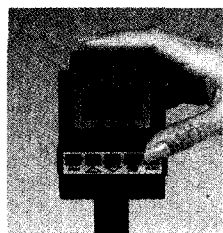
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can stick in a screwdriver and peel them like sausages." Another had his rig loaded dangerously high. "I got to get it now," he said. "Pretty soon there won't be any left."

These words exemplify the notion that extinction is an inevitable by-product of what is called "the tragedy of the commons." Coined by the biologist Garrett Hardin in 1968, the phrase refers to the instructive tale of the communal pasture in medieval villages. All nearby herdsmen were allowed, the story goes, to graze their cattle on this land. As individuals, the herdsmen benefited by grazing as many cattle as possible; but the community as a whole was better off when herdsmen restricted grazing enough to keep the grass alive. Because what one person conserved another could use, nobody had an incentive to conserve anything, and the commons was doomed. In general, Hardin argued, there is little incentive to maintain common property, for the costs may be borne by one while the benefits are enjoyed by all.

Similar reasoning applies to wildlife, which is owned, so to speak, by everyone. Society as a whole may benefit from its continued existence, but few people are prepared to pay for it by themselves. Passenger pigeons, a favorite game bird in the nineteenth century, were driven to extinction because hunters had no incentive to stop taking them when their fellows could keep blasting away. Conservationists believe that the yew, being a common resource, is a future passenger pigeon. Before the benefits of taxol were discovered, humanity was indifferent to the tree's fate, and its numbers declined slowly; now the yew is valuable, and its future, according to this reasoning, is bleaker still.

The customary response to this prospect is a law to protect common property. Few people oppose such legislation when it involves, say, anti-poaching laws to protect bison in Yellowstone Park. Opinions change when the Endangered Species Act compels the Richard Schroeders of America to abandon their golf courses. These people are not profiting from rare animals; they simply want to build something on their property. In some cases the government pays for the land, as the Fish and Wildlife Service did for the St. Johns National Wildlife Refuge. More often the law simply limits what landowners can build or change, forcing them to bear the cost of saving the species while others reap the benefits. People

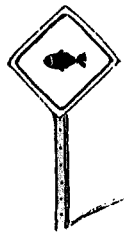
who would ordinarily be neutral toward rare animals are thus converted into outright antagonists. "If they had just let the cows run loose and eat the [caterpillars' food plants] down, they would never have had a butterfly problem," says Dewey Youngblood, one of Schroeder's financial backers. "The problem was, we tried to work with the butterfly. But it became apparent after two years that there was no end in sight to the problem." Not everyone is so nice. In a case that may be a harbinger of the future, one developer is widely reported to have sped a project along by destroying one of the three known populations of the endangered San Diego mesa mint.

This hostility, economists say, shows that the Endangered Species Act works against

people's incentives, not with them. Instead, the argument runs, we should compensate those who bear the brunt of saving a species. Gardner Brown, Jr., an economist at the University of Washington, points to the plight of the small landholders who live around Kenya's elephant parks. The parks are too small, and the roaming elephants eat up the crops outside their borders. Because the farmers cannot shoot the beasts, they must silently pay the price for their existence. "Why not give them something in return?" Brown asks. "Why should they suffer so that people in the developed world can feel good? What if we banned the importation of film by tourists, and awarded the farmers the exclusive Kodak franchise? Let them sell film at twenty dollars a roll! The tourists, who are the main beneficiaries of the elephants in any case, would be shelling out to save them. The farmers, who are being ruined by them, would have a leg

up." This example, Brown cautions, is merely illustrative, but it typifies economists' approach to conserving biodiversity. If the benefits of saving a species are tangible and measurable, they point out, why not turn over the task to a private party who is willing to bear the cost in exchange for a share of those benefits?

In the best cases the method is simple: convert the commons into private property that can be marketed. Weyerhaeuser's five acres of yew seedlings embody this transformation. The nursery is the result of an agreement between the tree company and a drug company, Bristol-Myers Squibb. Bristol-Myers researchers were interested in taxol as soon as they learned of its novel properties,



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but they were dismayed by the obstacles involved in producing it. When the hopeful results from the first clinical trials appeared, the firm began thinking that production might be worth the effort. Last January the National Cancer Institute signed an agreement with Bristol-Myers to cooperate in the development of the drug. Bristol-Myers had been investigating three major methods of increasing the taxol supply: synthesizing the drug, growing yew cells in the laboratory, and tree farming. For their part, Weyerhaeuser researchers had begun in 1987 to explore the chemistry, genetics, and husbandry of yews. After Bristol-Myers Squibb concluded its agreement with the NCI, Weyerhaeuser quietly negotiated with the drug maker. Last August the two companies announced a joint project to learn more about yew trees. If research and regulatory hurdles can be overcome, the domesticated yew could become a renewable source for a cancer medicine. In that case, says Steve Hee, Weyerhaeuser's nursery manager, "growing yews will become something that a lot of different people get involved in—it's the American way."

In the next few years Weyerhaeuser will plant ten million yews, preserve yew seeds from the wild to ensure the tree's continued genetic diversity, open its land to yew-bark collectors in areas where the company is about to harvest its prime crop, Douglas fir, and search for ways to increase the taxol yield in the tree. Other forest-product companies will doubtless follow. No government agency ordered them to save the yew. Acting out of greed, that disquieting emotion, the same companies that burned yews indiscriminately only a few years ago will now spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to grow and protect millions of *T. brevifolia*. The yew will join the rose, the orange, and the cow—species that flourish because of the marketplace.

Economists concede that not all stories can have such a happy ending. Yews stay in one place, making them easy to own. When a species has a large range, however, establishing property rights isn't practical. No one person could own monarch butterflies in the wild, because they migrate from Mexico to Canada. Moreover, the number of species with medical potential is small compared with the range of the world's living things. Most of the useful ones, NCI microbiologists say, are likely to be protozoa, algae, soil fungi, and the like—millions of unlovable organisms that contain a staggering array of genetic diversity. Finally, as David Ehrenfeld, the author of the Noah Principle, has written, "economic criteria of value are shifting, fluid, and utterly opportunistic in their practical application." Again, the yew may be an example. Weyerhaeuser's investment in the tree is a gamble: the company is betting that nobody will find a cheap way to synthesize taxol. But in 1988 researchers were already calling the drug "the number one target today of synthetic organic chemists," and interest has only increased since then. From a patient's point of view, cheaper taxol

is better taxol. If that taxol comes from a vat, Weyerhaeuser and other timber firms will drop the yew like a weed. The species will be on its own again.

"What exasperates me is the reluctance to try [the market] approach even when it is practical," says John Goldstein, an economist at the Department of the Interior. "Sure, markets won't save everything. But why won't people set them up when they can be useful?" One reason is that preserving the yew in a nursery is not the same as preserving it in the deep green-black shade of the forests that are the tree's natural setting. To conservationists, species are not sustained if they live only in zoos, on farms, or in seed banks. Biologists have scientific reasons for worrying about zoo populations—these tend to be small enough to risk losing genetic variability—but their larger distress is aesthetic and moral. Trained to view all living things as worthy, they are reluctant to assign high value to one species, because it implies assigning lower value to other species. "By assigning value to diversity," Ehrenfeld has argued, "we merely legitimize the process that is wiping it out." Markets, in this view, ineluctably sin against the Noah Principle. Our fellow passengers on Spaceship Earth should not be for sale.

To economists, this attitude is baffling. "We can't save every species out there," Gardner Brown says. "But we can save a lot of them if we want to, and save them in ways that make sense economically and scientifically. To do that, we have to make some choices about which species we're going to preserve. And nobody wants to do that! Nobody!"

Is that because they are dismayed by the prospect of playing God?

"Oh, sure. But in this case God is just sitting on His hands, which is a pretty dangerous thing for Him to do."

The Butterfly Solution

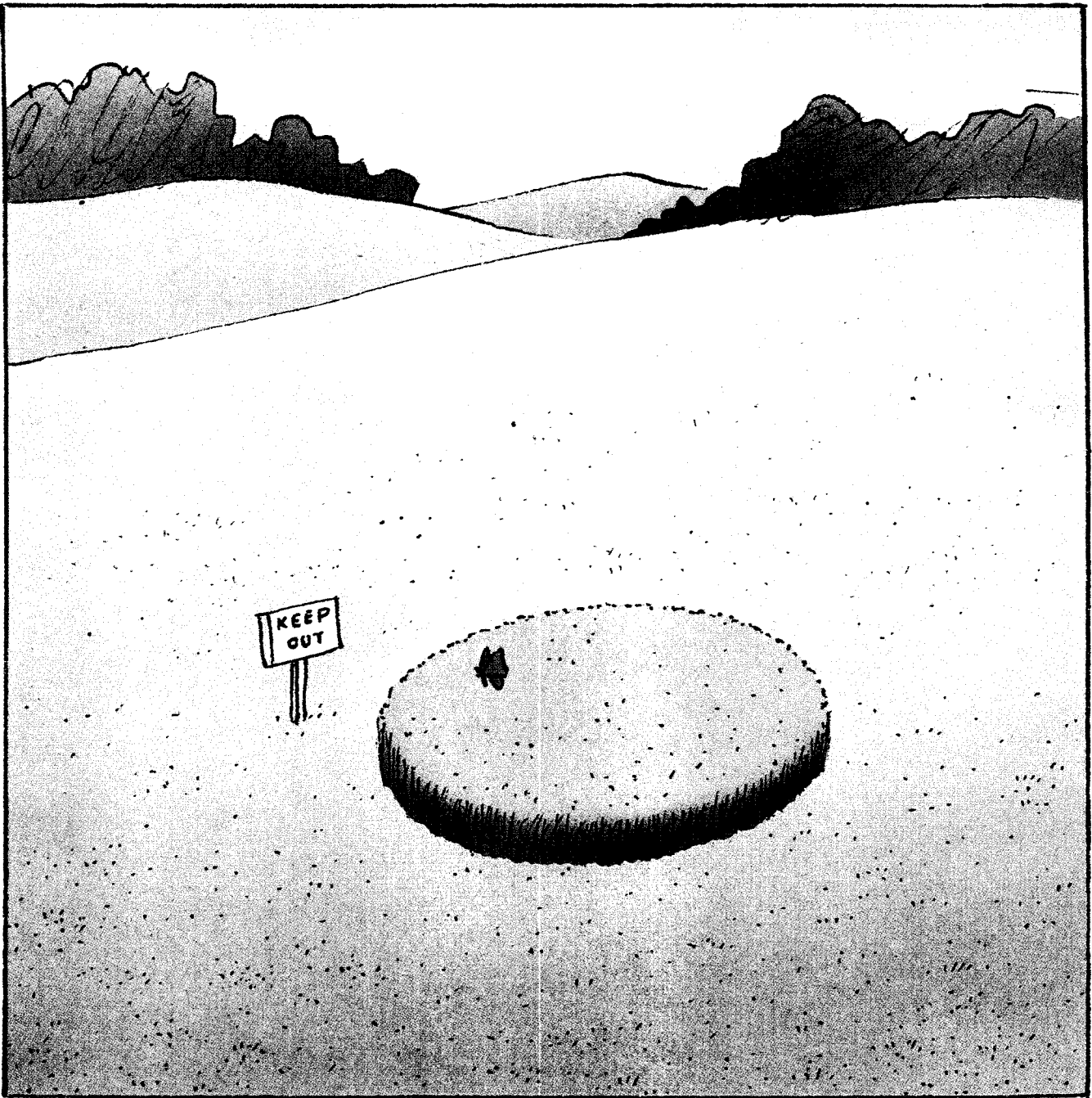
RICHARD SCHROEDER IS NOT THE ONLY PERSON IN Clatsop County, Oregon, with a butterfly problem. A few miles up the coast Northwest Conference Resorts, of San Carlos, California, is trying to build another golf course and housing complex in another patch of silverspot butterflies. Northwest Conference is run by Frank Hildreth and Donald Wudtke, two developers who would like people to know that they are not the sort of rapacious individuals one sees in the movies. "We're not fighting the system," Wudtke says. "We really believe in it." After the two men began thinking about the Oregon coast, Wudtke attended meetings of the butterfly recovery team, the group of scientists and bureaucrats set up by the Fish and Wildlife Service to guide the agency's efforts to restore the silverspot. Twenty-five professionals for a butterfly! He thought it astonishing. The scientists, Wudtke decided, were frustrated. "After eight years they hadn't established anything," he says. "They just talked and talked."



In March of 1990 Northwest Conference signed a contract to buy 276 acres of grassy sand dunes. Like Schroeder, they had a butterfly problem. Hildreth and Wudtke were confident, however, that they had a solution: building a golf course and housing right around *S.z. hippolyta*.

Their notion is more promising than it might seem at first glance. Silverspots, like many butterflies, are choosy about where they place their eggs. Because their caterpillars eat only the common blue violet, an inconspicuous wildflower that is customarily referred to by its scientific name, *Viola adunca*, they lay eggs exclusively near it. Because *V. adunca* grows only on open coastal grassland, that is where *S.z. hippolyta* lives. As it happens, the silverspot

tied its fortunes to the wrong flower, because such grassland is, in ecologists' terms, at a low "successional state," which means that it is inevitably overrun by brush—especially Scotch broom, a tall shrub with brilliant yellow flowers—and then by lodgepole pine. Luckily for the butterfly, it is also linked to a second species: *Homo sapiens*. Preferring to hunt in open fields, Native Americans periodically set fire to the grasslands, stopping the natural succession to brush and pine. The violets, a pioneering species, sprang up again after each burn, and in this way the butterfly flourished for centuries. Only in the 1930s did the silverspot meet its nemesis: Smokey Bear. The U.S. Forest Service campaigned against fires, and



the ecological succession from grasslands to forest began anew. Scotch broom overwhelmed the six-inch violets, and with them the butterfly. Although development has joined ecological succession in shrinking the silverspot's habitat along the coast, more than nine tenths of the loss has been natural, according to Paul Hammond, the lepidopterist who is the principal expert on *S.z. hippolyta*. Eight small populations have managed to hang on, two of which are in Clatsop County. Without human intervention, Hammond told us, Mother Nature will expunge the butterfly from the Clatsop plains by the year 2000.

Options are limited. Because the land is far more valuable than the butterfly, no market will save *S.z. hippolyta*.

It is unlikely to be the key to a new cancer cure, and it isn't nutritious. No nationwide group of amateur lepidopterists will pay admission to a silverspot park. Without the Endangered Species Act, the last silverspots in Clatsop County would already have been bulldozed out of existence. But with the act the butterfly has a slim chance. The law prevents private-property owners from acting to destroy a species. Where the threat is of natural origin, as it is for the silverspot, nothing compels the landowners to act to reverse the course of nature. They can twiddle their thumbs and wait for Scotch broom to annihilate the insect. With a recovery priority of 9, the silverspot is tied for 456th place on the Fish and Wildlife Service's priority

list. Hence no federal wildlife refuge will be established on the site of either of the two proposed resorts.

The butterfly's existence in Clatsop County depends on finding a compromise that will allow the insect to be saved by its apparent enemy: developers. Such a compromise is one of the many solutions that Schroeder, working with Hammond, tried without success; it is also what Hildreth and Wudtke hope to devise. The notion is far from foolish. "Golf courses and resorts are a perfect match for the butterfly's management needs," Hammond says. Although the habitat would have to remain separate from the golf course, putting them together could still be "a win-win situation."

Before 1982 such compromises were nearly impossible. Initially aimed mainly at poachers, the act's prohibition against killing endangered species gradually expanded to encompass the destruction of their habitat as well. People were almost completely barred from altering the territory of a listed species, no matter how low its numbers. (On the land belonging to Hildreth and Wudtke, the last survey found exactly one butterfly.) Developers had no reason to cooperate with the law. Recognizing the problem, Congress altered the Endangered Species Act to create what it called an opportunity for a "unique partnership between the public and private sectors in the interest of endangered species and habitat conservation." The amendment authorized the Fish and Wildlife Service to perform what are in effect swaps. People like Hildreth and Wudtke create a "habitat conservation plan," which ensures that private development will not hurt a species's chances of survival. If the plan is acceptable, the service issues an "incidental take permit," which promises that nobody will go to jail if a bulldozer operator inadvertently flattens a butterfly. The permit does not allow anyone to wipe out a species; only a few individuals of the species, if that, may be taken, and then just by accident. But it gives developers legal protection—provided that their plans do not imperil the species.

Habitat-conservation plans are intended to reconcile private interests with public efforts to save species. They identify a species's needs and then, where necessary, redirect and scale back the developer's project. "If you trim away the fat, you rarely end up with an either-or situation," explains Michael O'Connell, a conservation biologist at the World Wildlife Fund and a co-author of *Reconciling Conflicts Under the Endangered Species Act*, a recent book on habitat-conservation plans. The plans are not a magic solution to all controversies over endangered species—a point noted by Michael Bean, the chairman of the Environmental Defense Fund's wildlife program and one of O'Connell's co-authors on *Reconciling Conflicts*. But, Bean argues, the plans are well suited to situations where urban development threatens an endangered species's habitat. In these cases both sides can get what they want, and society as a whole is well served.

These hopes are unlikely to be realized with any frequency. The travails of Schroeder, Hildreth, and Wudtke illustrate the near-impossibility of such compromises. Schroeder proposed a trade: he would put a few fairways on existing habitat to the south, and plant violets in an area to the north. The Fish and Wildlife Service said neither yes nor no; it stalled, asking for more studies. Then Hammond discovered more butterfly habitat. The resort, to be economically viable, would extend into that newly found habitat. An honest man, Hammond reported his findings. The plan collapsed. No one believed that the service would expose itself to the charge of compromising the interests of a species. "They just sat on their hands," says Dennis Murphy, the conservation biologist, who is on the butterfly recovery team. "It was better than making a decision."

Despite this unhappy history, Hildreth and Wudtke are pressing on. Last summer the two men showed us a color map depicting their preliminary habitat-conservation plan. It set aside twenty-five acres, a tenth of the resort, for the butterfly. Hildreth said they had spent more than \$50,000 determining the right area; another \$200,000 was destined for environmental studies. "We'd like to think we're doing it as just part of good planning," Wudtke explained. Construction would be starting soon, and when the complex was finished the butterfly land would be managed properly instead of being overgrown by Scotch broom.

A few weeks later Hammond listened politely to our description of their plan. He sat in an office full of wide wooden trays, each of which contained dozens of spotted butterflies mounted on pins. He was, he stressed, not opposed to such projects. But he thought that the area the two men had set aside was probably too small. They would need to add more land. "And then," he said, "it will get expensive."

No doubt Hildreth and Wudtke will add as little as possible, and the Fish and Wildlife Service will find some reason to nitpick. One might call the resultant paralysis the silverspot syndrome: no resort, no butterfly, a lose-lose situation that combines the worst of both worlds.

Such an outcome may not be rare. The two butterfly plans were created by the developers alone. A likelier route to success, according to the authors of *Reconciling Conflicts*, is to enlist the aid of local governments and environmental groups, all parties investing time and money in drafting the plan. (Among other things, this makes the plan less litigation-prone.) But that drives up costs substantially, and sometimes drives them beyond the \$250,000 spent by Hildreth and Wudtke. Ultimately, preparation of the plan becomes so expensive that it is worthwhile only when the stakes are high—that is, when the value of the land in question is high. If land is expensive, so is setting it aside for the species, as many habitat-conservation plans require. Near Palm Springs, Califor-

nia, for example, a plan has carved out a 17,000-acre reserve for the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard, using \$25 million from developers, the Nature Conservancy, and federal and state agencies. If it survives internecine squabbling, a plan under development in Austin, Texas, will buy habitat for two bird, five invertebrate, and two plant species at a cost of more than \$93 million. Unsurprisingly, only ten habitat-conservation plans have been accepted in the past nine years.

More important, the plans are only a means of choosing *how* to save a species. They do not decide *whether* to save it. In the eyes of the law, listing a species is equivalent to making that decision; if human plans threaten the species, they must be set aside. Conservationists often claim that such stark conflicts will be uncommon. (Peter Raven, the director of the Missouri Botanical Garden, has argued that trade-offs are "truly necessary" only in "rare cases.") But the United States has thousands of people like Richard Schroeder and it has thousands of endangered species. Inevitably, they will collide—everywhere and often. In these fights, according to the law, only one side is supposed to win.

Technically, losers do have one hope: the God Committee. But it can be convened only when the controversy involves the federal government; if private developers do not need federal permits, there is no avenue of appeal. In practice even this limited way out is rarely used, because making the appeal places the appellant in the unenviable position of going on record as wanting to do in a species. Few wish to be seen that way—one reason that the God Committee has been called on only three times in the fourteen years of its existence. (The third appeal occurred just last September, pitting the Bureau of Land Management against the northern spotted owl. A decision is expected later this year.)

AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, ENDANGERED SPECIES almost always win in conflicts with development—an outcome that flows from the act's grounding in the Noah Principle. Yet the Noah Principle makes choices next to impossible, and in this regard the Endangered Species Act must be changed. In the eyes of the law all species are equal, because each is of incalculable worth. Americans are willing to set aside some human concerns to save the bald eagle and the grizzly bear. But no one has demonstrated that they will give their informed consent to laws that grant the same privileges to the Kretschmar Cave mold beetle. Indeed, a casual glance through the magazines of the environmental movement reveals a marked preference for charismatic megafauna over creepy-crawlies; the pages of *Sierra* and *National Wildlife* are devoted to lush color photographs of mammals and birds. As a result, funding for species preservation is awarded with blithe disregard for the principle of equality. On the infrequent occasions when the Noah Principle is invoked, it creates contempt for the law. If society

prefers charismatic megafauna, priority should be given to them without apology. If biologists think otherwise, it should fall to them to change public preferences.

More important, the claim of incalculable value forces all sides into acting as if cost meant nothing. Powerful interests don't want endangered species anywhere near them, yet the law states with great specificity that their wishes are not to be heeded. The situation invites hypocrisy. Thousands of jobs and billions of dollars are at stake, and economic considerations *will* be heard. Unable to get in the front door legitimately, money and influence sneak in through the back. (The same Congress that declared endangered species to be of "incalculable" value evaded the intent of the act by allocating little for their welfare, and subsequent Congresses have not done much better.) Many species never make it onto the list for fear of the consequences—not to the species but to the economic and political forces that may be crimped if they are listed. And little wonder, for those who cannot prevent listing are forced, actively or passively, to restore the species for the enjoyment of the rest of society. Compensating them for their costs may not, as some economists claim, be the easiest resolution. But it would stop the law from turning property owners into the enemies of the endangered species on their land. Without the support of property owners, the "incalculable" value of species will eventually become a chimera.

The thought of deliberately consigning any species to extinction, let alone thousands of them, is repugnant, and no one we spoke to liked it. (Asked if he would like to see the silverspot vanish, Schroeder looked surprised. "Of course not," he said.) But we will inevitably cause extinctions; we cannot hide from it. Taking responsibility for our actions is a better course than letting species die of our indecision. To pretend that we are acting to save everything is intellectually dishonest. It turns the hard choices over to the forces of litigation and bureaucratic inertia. Clinging to the Noah Principle may make us feel good, but it ensures that the nation's biological heritage will be managed, as Lewis Carroll would have had it, by Helter and Skelter.

Last June we drove down the coastal highway to Richard Schroeder's proposed golf course. We found it just north of a gas station and across from a driving range, as Schroeder had said. A dirt road led into the property; we took it, rocking through the ruts left by four-wheel-drive vehicles. In a moment we came to a cow pasture: prime butterfly territory. Dotted with the bright-yellow blossoms of Scotch broom, the field was a sad sight—if you were interested in butterflies. The owner, one of Schroeder's neighbors, wants to retire after decades on the farm. He is waiting for the shrub to take over. Then, maybe, the land can be sold for condominiums.

It was too early in the season to see silverspots. We looked anyway—but of course we didn't find them. □

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SEASON PREVIEW

North America's film festivals

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

Park City, Utah
January 16-26

Robert Redford's Sundance Institute, founded in 1981 as an experimental lab for screenwriters, playwrights, and filmmakers, has evolved this annual event into the U.S. independent-film festival and competition. This year 15 innovative documentaries and 17 dramatic films will compete. The festival, which screens about 100 films, will also showcase Peter Sellars's first film (*The Cabinet of Dr. Ramirez*), Zhang Yi-mou's *The Red Lantern*, a Stanley Kubrick retrospective, new British and Latin American cinema, and an extensive selection of short-subject films. Seminars and panel discussions with the filmmakers will explore the issues and the art of independent cinema. Package tickets can be mail-ordered in advance; individual tickets go on sale January 2. For more information or tickets: Sundance Film Festival, Box 16450, Salt Lake City, UT 84116; (801) 322-1700.

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

San Francisco, California
April 23-May 7

Some film buffs have been coming to the Bay Area's festival since it began, 35 years ago. The oldest film festival in the western hemisphere, it has a reputation as one of the most eclectic and intellectual in the U.S. The programming features more than 80 movies in some 30 languages. There are premieres, retrospectives, in-person tributes, sneak previews, and restored works. A traditional highlight is silent-film screenings accompanied by "the



mighty Wurlitzer" organ at the historic Castro Theatre. The complete program will be available March 25. For more information or tickets (on sale in early April): San Francisco Film Society, 1560 Fillmore St., San Francisco, CA 94115; (415) 567-4641.

SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Seattle, Washington
May 14-June 7

Seattlelites are not fair-weather movie fans. Thanks to their cinépassion—or the rain—this town has the highest number of regular filmgoers and the best-attended film festival in the nation. Among the 140 or so feature films unreeled, there are premieres, archival treasures, and tributes. This year's program salutes French and new Japanese cinema. A perennial sell-out is the Secret Festival, a Sunday-afternoon series of unannounced screenings of films that are officially unavailable—viewers are sworn to secrecy about what they are to see. All-inclusive passes are available now; individual tickets go on sale May 1. For more information or

tickets: Cinema Seattle, The Egyptian Theatre, 801 E. Pine St., Seattle, WA 98122; (206) 324-9996.

TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL

Telluride, Colorado
September 4-7

Every Labor Day weekend Telluride, a tiny former mining town high in the southwestern Colorado mountains, brings together those who make film and those who love it. Famous for its programming excellence, intimate atmosphere, and breathtaking scenery, it is one of the world's most prestigious film events. The ticket application warns potential visitors that "the entire weekend is programmed as an exceedingly intense experience." On Monday the whole festival rides up the ski lift for a picnic lunch and seminar at 12,000 feet. The line-up is never announced in advance but is always impressive. Make plane reservations early; the planes from Denver to Telluride fill up fast. For more information or tickets (available May 20 and sold out by July 4): the National Film Preserve, Box B1156, Hanover, NH 03755; (603) 643-1255.

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Toronto, Ontario
September 10-19

Praised as one of the best-programmed, best-organized events of its kind, Toronto's 17-year-old Festival of Festivals is the largest film feast in North America. Close to a quarter of a million people will view nearly 300 films (many world premieres) from 40 countries on 13 screens over 10 days. The festival specializes in contemporary world and Canadian cinema but also offers a scrupulous range of new Asian and Latin American films, first features, spotlights on directors, archival restorations, Hollywood fall releases, and midnight screenings of potential cult movies. For more information or tickets (on sale in July): Toronto International Film Festival, 70 Carlton St., Toronto, Ontario M5B 1L7, Canada; (416) 967-7371.

NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL

New York, New York
September 25-October 11

New York's film festival has helped launch the world's fall cultural season for 30 years. Its highly selective program and media omnipresence make it extremely influential. Thirty films will be screened at Avery Fisher and Alice Tully halls, and sidebar events are planned for the newly opened Walter Reade Theater. Many artists attend their screenings, and the lively, participatory seminars are not to be missed. Tickets will be available on September 6. For more information or an advance ticket application: The Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023; (212) 875-5610.



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If our goal is to preserve as many kinds of plants and animals as possible, it makes little sense to spend limited funds on heroic steps to rescue a handful of near-extinct species. A more effective strategy would focus on protecting ecosystems that support maximum biological diversity

STOPGAP MEASURES

BY SUZANNE WINCKLER

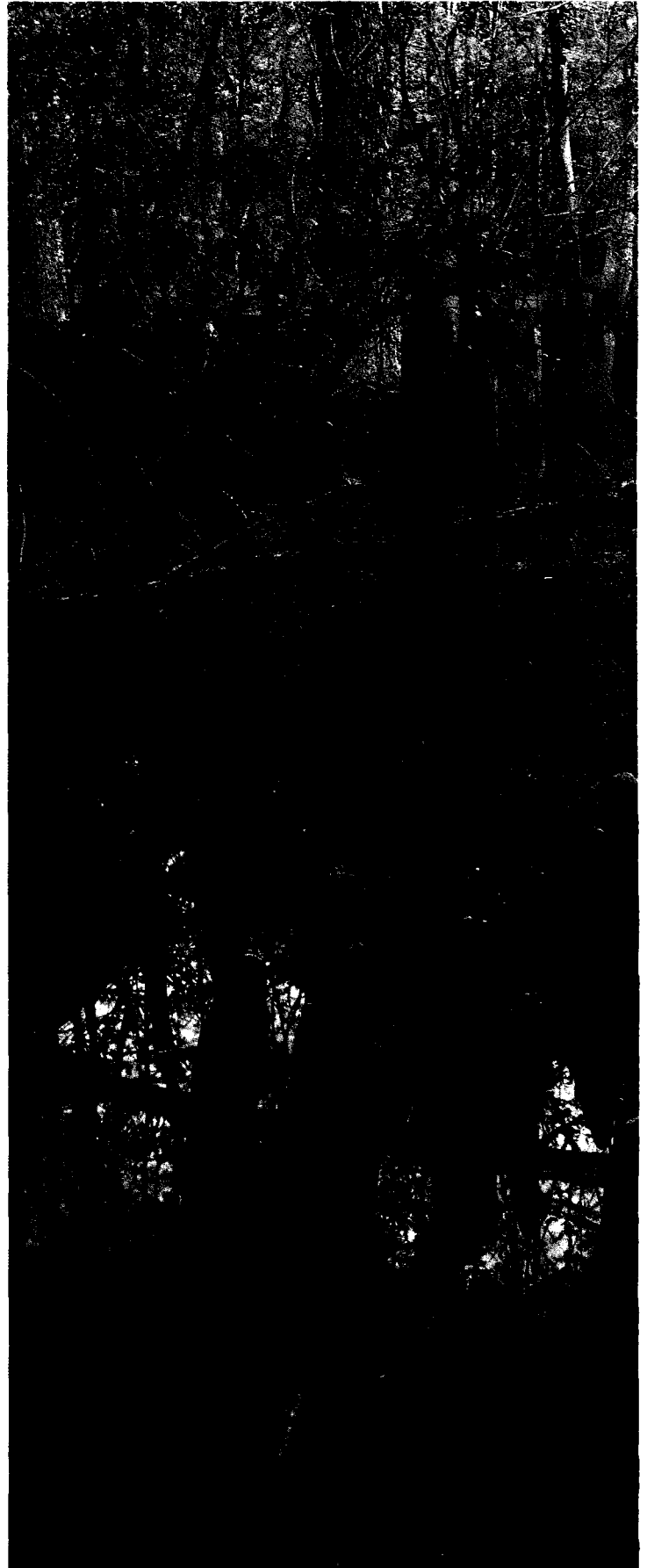
TO SAY THAT THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT is not working is to sound ungrateful for what it has accomplished. Inasmuch as tens, if not hundreds, of organisms that would undoubtedly be extinct by now—including the Attwater's prairie chicken, the Florida panther, the black-footed ferret, the Kirtland's warbler, and the Puerto Rican parrot—are instead hanging on by a thread, the act has been a success.

The continued existence, however precarious, of these species is deeply satisfying to many people. The creatures are beautiful (the whooping crane); they stand for ideals that are important to us culturally (the bald eagle); they exhibit incredible behavior (the Attwater's prairie chicken); they are stunning emblems of the clos-

"The way to save species is to save the places where they live." Right and below, a cypress swamp in Texas



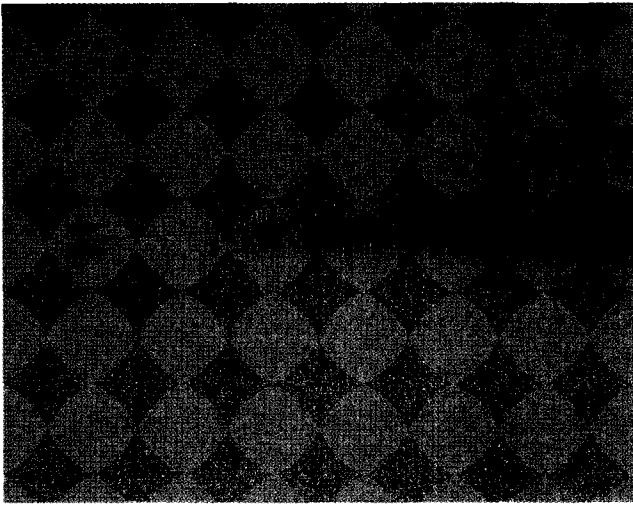
JIM BONES





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CHARLES KREBS/ALISTOCK



Riverine wetland and avocet, southern Wyoming

est we can come to pristine wilderness (the grizzly bear). Our knowledge of their presence in the wild helps assuage our guilt about what we've done to them in particular and to the natural world in general, which might imply that the Endangered Species Act is ultimately designed to treat our own brand of sickness and not theirs. Regardless of what these animals do to make us feel better, they are the walking wounded of the world, and it costs millions of dollars to keep them out there.

That it saves organisms from extinction is faint praise for a law with the far loftier aspiration of "better safeguarding, for the benefit of all citizens, the Nation's heritage in fish, wildlife, and plants." It is the stated purpose of the law not just to keep species from going extinct but to return them to viability. In this regard it is failing.

The Endangered Species Act takes under its wing an array of taxa—from full species (whooping crane) to subspecies (Attwater's prairie chicken) to discrete populations of species (the Mojave population of the desert tortoise). "Taxon" (plural "taxa") refers to any of the groupings into which taxonomists classify organisms. As of last November the federal government listed 1,196 taxa around the world—more than half of them occurring in the United States and its territories—as either endangered or threatened, one of which dubious distinctions is necessary for care under the act. Another 3,500 or so are waiting for review. Among this second group—known as candidate species or Category 1 and Category 2 species—are many plants and animals acknowledged by scientists to be in far worse danger than species that have already qualified. They languish in bureaucratic limbo because of a perennial problem of the act: it never has enough funding. A number of candidate species have gone extinct before they could be considered for listing.

The process for listing threatened and endangered species is complicated, but if there is an overriding criterion for listing, it is that the species is demonstrably imperiled. John Fay, a botanist with the Division of Endan-

gered Species of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, explains the implicit ranking process: "We try to set our priorities so that those species that face the greatest threat are the ones we address first. The alternative—intervening with things that are in better shape—would mean losing a substantial number of species in immediate danger. And within the terms of the Endangered Species Act that's unacceptable."

This is what critics point to as a major failing of the act. It intervenes in a way that no intelligent nurse, paramedic, or doctor would under analogous circumstances. It has thrown out the window any concept of triage. It does not sort and care for species in such a way as to maximize the number of surviving species. On the contrary, it attempts to save the hardest cases, the equivalent of the terminally ill and the brain-dead. It pays less attention to species that would be easier and cheaper to save—species that require treatment akin to minor surgery, a splint, or a Band-Aid. The act has no concept of preventive medicine, of keeping healthy species from peril. Consequently, many animals and plants that were common twenty years ago—were even considered in some realms to be pests—are now entitled to care under the Endangered Species Act.

One reason the act eschews triage is that its enforcers, not to mention many endangered-species watchdogs, do not want—and do not want to allow anyone else—to "play God." There is no doubt that such a role confers awesome responsibilities. The triage of species and the triage of individuals of one species (as it is practiced in emergency rooms and on battlefields) differ by several orders of magnitude. Few people would want the ethical burden of deciding the fate of a whole species—of saying, for instance, that the blunt-nosed leopard lizard can go but the humpback whale stays. John Fay says, "All we can do is try to preserve our options. My absolutely favorite quote is from Aldo Leopold: 'To save every cog in the wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.' That's what we're trying to do. We don't know which ones are important. We don't know which ones are going to disappear."

Moral neutrality is noble, but it creates problems in the categories of money (there has never been enough allocated to save every cog; there is no promise of more in the future) and biology (the cogs we are saving are so crippled, so compromised, that they can barely perform their assigned functions in their respective niches). To refuse to play God is to play the devil by default.

It's also true that saving species that don't need much fixing is boring. We thrive on crisis management, and we love things that are rare much more than things that are common. The people in the public and private sectors who work on policy that actually attempts to protect species before they become endangered—for instance, the Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of Migratory Bird Management, the Nature Conservancy, and the International

Council for Bird Preservation—receive precious little attention from the media for their work, because what they do is tedious and unglamorous: it does not play well in measured media doses the way a hand puppet feeding a nestling condor does.

Uncertain Return on Investment

IN 1988 CONGRESS BEGAN TO REQUIRE THAT THE FISH and Wildlife Service submit annual reports on federal expenditures for the U.S. roster of endangered and threatened species. (The federal government spends little money on foreign species.) This is not an easy task—at least thirteen federal agencies make regular outlays of money for endangered species. Nor are the reports ever likely to be more than a best guess of expenditures, since endangered-species activities often merge with other operations. For example, prescribed burning—setting fires to remove the brushy vegetation once held at bay by natural fires—is a management tool at Francis Marion National Forest, in coastal South Carolina, which aids not only endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers but also game species like turkey and quail.

While there is much to be said for making the protectors of endangered species accountable for how they spend our money, the expense reports (two have been prepared so far, for 1989 and 1990) are sadly divisive documents that reinforce the individual-species thrust of the Endangered Species Act. They provide ammunition not only for those who are alarmed by how much we're spending on, say, the Higgins' eye pearly mussel (\$437,700 in 1989; \$367,000 in 1990) but also for those who are upset at what we're *not* spending on, say, the desert tortoise, a species that because of a strange upper-respiratory disease is dropping dead at an alarming pace in the Mojave Desert. The tortoise got almost \$500,000 in 1989. Its advocates saw that boosted to more than \$4 million in 1990.

By focusing on individual species, the expenditure reports perpetuate a chronic lack of attention to the big picture. Environmentalists are defending expenditures for the plants and animals to which they have, for whatever reason, chosen allegiance when instead they should be addressing a whole different set of questions and concerns. Why does the list of endangered and threatened species keep getting longer? Why have only a few species ever been taken off the list? Where on earth will the money come from to care for every new addition to the lengthening list?

The biggest question the expenditure reports should provoke is this: Why is half of all the money earmarked for endangered and threatened species being spent on only twelve of them? In 1990, of \$102 million apportioned among 591 taxa, a total of \$55 million went to twelve. They are, in descending order of expenditures, the northern spotted owl, the least Bell's vireo, the griz-

zly bear, the red-cockaded woodpecker, the Florida panther, the desert tortoise, the bald eagle, the ocelot, the jaguarundi, the peregrine falcon, the California least tern, and the Chinook salmon. The apportionment does not become much more equal after this first dozen. The next dozen species—which include the gray wolf, the southern sea otter, and the Puerto Rican parrot—received the next \$19 million. In other words, the remaining quarter of funding—\$28 million—was shared among about 570 other organisms.

The fortunate two dozen or so creatures that command three quarters of the money are among the most beautiful on earth. They have captured the hearts of a wide assortment of people. These people would better serve the objects of their affections if they cared for whole ecosystems—the degradation of which is largely responsible for our degraded wildlife—with the same fervor.

Intensive care for animals and plants is costly. It is not cheap to hire airplanes and helicopters for the surveillance of populations (as was done before the last California condors were taken from the wild), set up captive-breeding facilities (for the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, the whooping crane, and the black-footed ferret), translocate animals, either in order to get them away from the threat of people or in order to invigorate isolated gene pools (the grizzly bear, the red-cockaded woodpecker), release individuals back into the wild (successfully accomplished with the peregrine falcon), attempt to establish breeding populations (tried and failed with the whooping crane), or keep parasitic cowbirds out of the nests of endangered birds (being done year in and year out for the Kirtland's warbler, the golden-cheeked warbler, and the black-capped vireo). When we focus treatment on the most afflicted, we can expect to pay.

It is true that the Endangered Species Act inherited some desperate cases when it went into effect. The whooping crane, the California condor, and the Kirtland's warbler are examples of species that were rare to begin

Old-growth forest, Olympic Peninsula, Washington



CHARLES MAUZY/ALISTOCK



Sunrise over boreal forest, northern Minnesota

with and suffered from the presence of people within their ranges. Thirty years before the Endangered Species Act, biologists had begun the arduous and expensive endeavor of bringing the whooping crane back, from a single flock of fourteen individuals in the wild. After fifty years of intensive management, the wild flock of whooping cranes numbers about 140 birds. This population—like all small populations—is intensely vulnerable: last winter nine birds, representing six percent of the flock, were lost.

It is also true that many endangered and threatened species need only moderate sums of money to survive. For instance, certain narrowly endemic plants—plants that have evolved in rare microhabitats, such as the bunched cory cactus and the McKittrick pennyroyal—require little more than the purchase of the land on which they grow, and small outlays for monitoring and law enforcement (cacti, for example, are particularly susceptible to rapacious collectors).

But for every one of these bargain species there is a very expensive one waiting for a constituency to care enough, waiting to get a little more endangered, or waiting for its recovery plan to be approved. To name just a few, they include the black-capped vireo, the golden-cheeked warbler, several of the Columbia River salmon stocks, the humpback whale, the San Marcos gambusia, Texas wild rice, and the thirty-odd species of freshwater mussels now menaced by the accidental introduction of the alien zebra mussel.

Last-Ditch Spending

THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM IS THAT MONEY will save these mortally damaged species. And more money is on the way. Since the Reagan years, when funding for and morale within the Division of Endangered Species fell to all-time lows, its fortunes have enjoyed a reversal. President George

Bush's appointment of John Turner as the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has restored a sense of mission and esprit de corps to the division, and Bush's 1992 budget included a record request of almost \$60 million for the endangered-species program. Although these developments are salutary, they are the sort of modest encouragement that rewards the status quo and inhibits critical assessment of a noble piece of legislation that is fraught with problems.

All bird watchers have had the gut-wrenching experience of returning to a woods, marsh, or stream that has transmogrified into a condominium project or a cornfield or a parking lot. Their local, subjective sense of loss can be objectified and magnified across the continent. In 1987 the Office of Technology Assessment published a document called "Technologies to Maintain Biological Diversity." It is full of depressing information, including this rueful sentence: "Natural ecosystem diversity has declined in the United States historically, and no evidence suggests that this long-term trend has been arrested." The authors continue, "Twenty-three ecosystem types that once covered about half the conterminous United States now cover only about 7 percent."

The recent book *Where Have All the Birds Gone?*, by the biologist John Terborgh, is a long lament over the loss of habitat in North America: only a fraction of a percent remains of the virgin forests that once covered the continent east of the Rockies; more than 90 percent of the woodlands along rivers and streams in the arid West have been eliminated, for the sake of flood control or irrigation; 99 percent of Iowa's wetlands, 90 percent of Nebraska's and Missouri's, 89 percent of Illinois's, and 80 percent of Minnesota's have been drained and converted to cropland.

In order to save the most-endangered species, the act diverts attention and money from the much more crucial goal of preserving overall biological diversity—that is, preserving the maximum number of healthy species in ecosystems that require a minimum of maintenance. The way to save species is to save the places where they live. By extension, the way to save the greatest number of species is to save the places that house the richest biological inventory. One example is the 17,800-acre Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, where, according to J. Michael Scott, a research biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and his colleagues, there are 257 vertebrate species, 170 of which have resident populations. "The populations of many of these species number in the tens of thousands," Scott et al. write. "The annual cost of managing this system, estimated at one million dollars, is less than the annual expenditures on the recovery effort for the critically endangered California condor." The comparatively low cost of maintenance leads Scott and his colleagues to conclude, "Prevention is cheaper than treatment."

The Endangered Species Act has institutionalized the

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bizarre notion that the primary legal justification for the preservation of an ecosystem is a species teetering on the brink of extinction. That it is one of the most magnificent landscapes in North America is somehow no longer reason enough to preserve the last remnants of the Pacific old-growth forest. Instead, the only legal mechanism available is to require the preservation of some minimum configuration of that forest in hopes of keeping the northern spotted owl—one species among thousands that dwell there—from going extinct. At the same time, the boreal forests of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and upper Michigan, the marshes and wetlands rimming our coasts, the prairie potholes of the Midwest, the riparian woodlands along streams in the West, and other ecosystems will continue to shrink until they yield evidence of the endangered species that will warrant their preservation.

These ecosystems are well on their way to providing the requisite crippled species. Of particular concern to biologists is the roster of declining birds, any one of which may soon vie with the northern spotted owl for attention in the media. They are the common loon, the wood thrush, the Swainson's warbler, and the marbled murrelet, which rely on various forest ecosystems; the reddish egret, a coastal species; the surfbird, the bristle-thighed curlew, and the buff-breasted sandpiper, highly migratory shorebirds; and the vermilion flycatcher, the loggerhead shrike, and the grasshopper sparrow, denizens of various grassland, prairie, and plains ecosystems.

These problems point to an obvious conclusion: the Endangered Species Act is treating the symptom and not the disease. The increasing numbers of plants and animals that are becoming biological wards of the government are a manifestation of what can only be described as an ecosystems crisis. Yet the servants of the Endangered Species Act, charged explicitly with habitat conservation, have never excelled at the real-estate business. They have come to rely on heroic measures for saving one species at a time in large part because they have failed at the alternative of saving habitat. The act has continually gone against the grain of the American desire to exploit the natural resources of this continent, its arterial system of fresh water, and its surrounding seas without considering the consequences.

Defenders of the act, many of whom know exactly what's wrong with it and willingly discuss its flaws in private, worry that public criticism will play into the hands of the pro-development groups who perennially try to weaken it. Many environmentalists are girding for just such an assault this spring, when the act comes up in Congress for reauthorization. They should not fear criticism from within their own ranks, however. When adversaries of the act assail its shortcomings—when, for example, they complain that we are spending too much money on endangered species—environmentalists have an obvious counteroffensive: The reason the act has engendered a costly and unwieldy bureaucracy for the perpetual care

of compromised organisms is that pro-development groups have been so successful at evading the central principle of the act—the preservation of ecosystems. The very people who complain about the act are the ones who have made it malfunction.

Gap Analysis

OVER THE PAST DECADE STEADILY INCREASING numbers of zoologists, botanists, geneticists, environmental-policy makers, land managers, geographers, and developers have been making the case that it is time to focus on the rational, systematic, continent-wide preservation of those ecosystems that support maximum biological diversity. A leader in this cause has been J. Michael Scott, who was the project leader for the California-condor recovery program from 1984 to 1986, and before that spent ten years in Hawaii, which harbors the greatest concentration of endangered birds in the world. Hawaii also holds an appalling number of endangered plants, of which the Cooke's kokio, a tree, is considered the most endangered species in the world. Only half of one Cooke's kokio exists; it is grafted onto a related species in a botanical garden in Hawaii.

On behalf of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Scott and a team of twenty-six ornithologists, botanists, and statisticians were assigned the task of conducting an inventory of the forest birds of the Hawaiian Islands; they produced one of the classic documents in field ornithology, *Forest Bird Communities of the Hawaiian Islands*. During years of camping in the rain and slogging in the mud (Hawaii harbors the wettest places on earth) and worrying about the people on his team ("I count as our biggest achievement outside the scientific realm that we got through six years of that kind of survey in remote country and we didn't lose a single person"), Scott began to get his first inklings of what was wrong with the management of endangered species. He began to see the gaps.

For their study Scott and his team made Mylar maps of the vegetation of each island, of the range of each species of bird, and of the existing federal, state, and private land holdings that preserved the presumed habitats of these species. When the maps were laid on top of one another, the lack of overlap was glaringly apparent: the areas of greatest avian diversity were outside the protection of preserves.

In this simple fashion Scott performed one of the first exercises in what has come to be called "gap analysis" (F. William Burley, an Oregon biologist and rancher, is usually credited with coining the term). Gap analysis looks for unprotected landscapes that are rich in species. Far faster than a man stacking maps, and with the ability to manipulate much more information, computers store, manage, retrieve, and analyze vast amounts of information from satellite imagery and data bases that show for a particular

landscape the different species on it, their distribution, and various habitat factors (vegetation, soil type, geologic elements) and cultural features (zoning, roadways, land ownership, dominant land use). Much of the species information being used comes from information gathered by the Nature Conservancy, a private land-preservation organization that has been a leader in the assessment of ecosystems in North America.

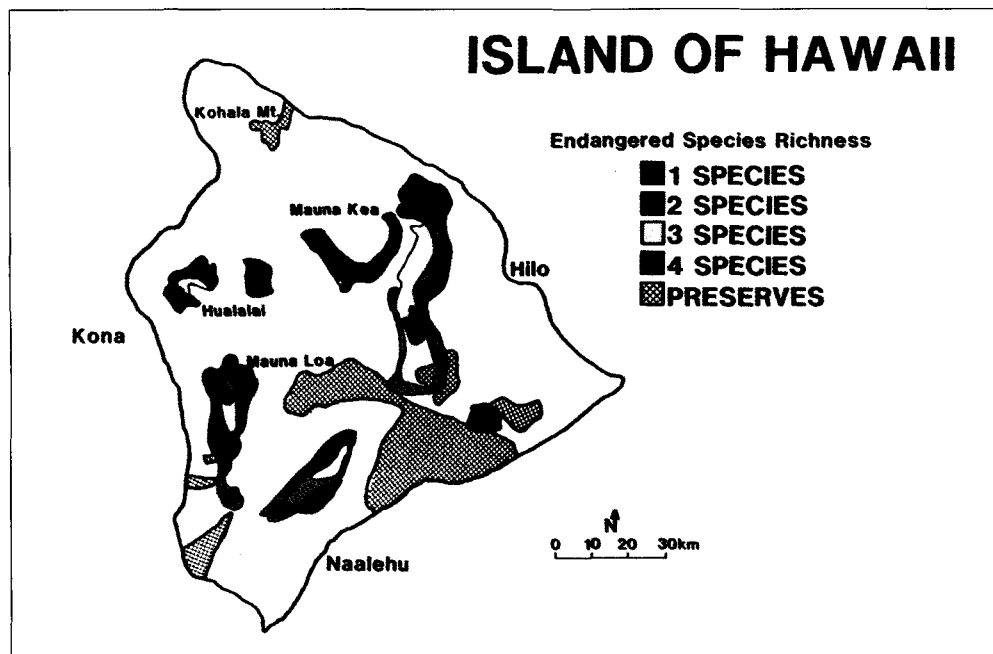
The development of gap analysis as a technique for locating areas of rich biological diversity has coincided with increased concern about rapidly dwindling tropical ecosystems. Biologists and policy-makers working in the tropics have been quick to use gap-analysis approaches to try to find and save the richest examples of those ecosystems. Scott came up against endangered-species bias when he began looking for funding to start doing some gap analysis of North American ecosystems. "I got no buyers for two years," he says. He kept hearing, "'Come back in twenty-five years and we'll talk to you. Right now we're up to our eyeballs in endangered species.' But look, I said, this is the way to get around it." Scott and his colleagues, funded by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, have completed a gap analysis for Idaho. "The same sorts of patterns we were finding in Hawaii hold true for Idaho," Scott says. "Even with a state that has more than fifty percent federal land ownership, we're still finding large numbers of natural vegetation types that are completely outside natural preserve areas." Gap analysis is also in progress or about to begin for seventeen other states.

Analyzing the gaps in protected biological diversity across North America will be merely a stimulating computer game for a handful of biologists and geographers unless the new method is applied to rethinking and rearranging land use on the continent. "What I envision," Scott says, "is making this information available to people who are in a position to make management decisions—federal landowners, for instance, who can see how their property plays a role in the protection of biological diversity, where a shift in land management could afford more protection to an area of high species richness or to a vegetation type that is unprotected in other areas.

That requires no expenditures of dollars. That's simply a shift in management."

Scott believes that gap analysis can steer bureaucracies toward buying unprotected areas that are rich in species—and away from ecosystems that, however beautiful to behold, are already adequately protected. Gap analysis promotes the greatest biodiversity at the least cost to the taxpayer. By also identifying areas of potential conflict (areas where oil exploration is occurring, for example), gap analysis allows buyers to find the species-rich land least encumbered by controversy. Gap analysis locates lands owned by willing sellers, not by parties who are intractable and litigious—and this is its strongest virtue.

Perhaps Michael Scott has impossibly lofty goals for gap analysis; perhaps he is simply tired of the good fight; perhaps the evolved policies of the Endangered Species



An example of the maps produced by J. Michael Scott and the Fish and Wildlife Service

Act are the best we can hope for in an imperfect world. But when I think of biologists frantically building nest holes for red-cockaded woodpeckers, or keeping vigil under the last few Puerto Rican parrot nests in the wild, or watching black-footed ferrets die of canine distemper, or abandoning their efforts to establish another flock of whooping cranes at Grays Lake, Idaho, or pitching cowbirds out of the nests of Kirtland's warblers year in and year out, I no longer call to mind the words of Aldo Leopold or Henry David Thoreau or John Muir or any of the Native American chiefs who spoke so eloquently long ago about the sacredness of the earth and mankind's debt to the beasts. Instead, I think of Hampton Carson, a geneticist and an authority on endangered Hawaiian flora and fauna, who once wrote, "Nature is a better stock-keeper than we are." □

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*Apprehension about the disappearance of animal or
plant species may be misplaced, a naturalist argues, and may arise out
of a mistaken and shortsighted view of the evolutionary process*

THE CASE FOR HUMAN BEINGS

BY THOMAS PALMER



AN ARGUMENT, A HUMAN ARGUMENT, MAINTAINS that we ought to be concerned about the disappearance of individual animal species. If it could be directed at the objects of its solicitude, it would go approximately as follows: "You lesser beasts had better watch your step—*we'll* decide when you can leave." It recognizes that once chromosome patterns combine at the species level, they become unique and irreplaceable—one cannot make a rattlesnake, for instance, out of anything but more rattlesnakes. It looks at the speed at which such patterns are disappearing and shudders to think how empty our grandchildren's world might become, patternwise.

In the past twenty years this argument has conquered much of the world; it may soon become part of the thinking of nearly every school child.

Perhaps because we ourselves are a species, we regard the species level as that at which deaths become truly irreversible. Populations, for instance, can and do fade in and out; when a species dies, however, we call it extinct and retire its name forever, being reasonably certain that it will not reappear in its old form.

Students of evolution have shown that species death, or extinction, is going on all the time, and that it is an essential feature of life history. Species are adapted to their environments; as environments change, some species

find themselves in the position of islanders whose islands are washing away, and they go under. Similarly, new islands (or environments) are appearing all the time, and they almost invariably produce new species.

What alarms so many life historians is not that extinctions are occurring but that they appear to be occurring at a greater rate than they have at all but a few times in the past, raising the specter of the sort of wholesale die-offs that ended the reign of the dinosaurs. Do we want, they ask, to exile most of our neighbors to posterity? Exactly how much of our planet's resources do we mean to funnel into people-making? Such questions are serious; they involve choosing among futures, and some of these futures are already with us, in the form of collapsing international fisheries, rich grasslands gnawed and trampled into deserts, forests skeletonized by windborne acids, and so forth. Thus high rates of extinction are seen as a symptom of major problems in the way our species operates—problems that may, if we're not careful, be solved for us. A new word has been coined to define the value most threatened by these overheated rates: "biodiversity." As species disappear, biodiversity declines, and our planet's not-quite-limitless fund of native complexities—so some argue—declines with it.

The process described above is indeed occurring. Human beings tend to change environments; when they do, species vanish. The Puritans, for example, though famous for their efforts to discipline sexuality, imposed upon Massachusetts an orgy of ecological licentiousness: they introduced dozens of microbes, weeds, and pests foreign to the region, some of which played havoc with the natives. Human beings tend to travel everywhere, and to bring their cats, rats, and fleas with them, so that hardly any environment is truly isolated today, and creatures that evolved in isolated environments have paid a high price. Of the 171 species and subspecies of birds that have become extinct in the past 300 years, for example, 155 were island forms.

Since extinction is a particularly final and comprehensive form of death, species preservation and its corollary, habitat protection, are now seen as the most important means available to stem the erosion of biodiversity. So far, so good—but I wonder if these ideas, which emphasize diversity at the species level, fail to give an adequate picture of recent biological history. If, for instance, biodiversity is regarded as the chief measure of a landscape's richness, then the American continents reached their peak of splendor on the day after the first Siberian spear-men arrived, and have been deteriorating ever since. More recent developments—such as the domestication of maize, the rise of civilizations in Mexico and Peru, and the passage of the U.S. Bill of Rights—are neutral at best, and are essentially invisible, since they are the work of a single species, a species no more or less weighty than any other, and already present at the start of the interval. But what kind of yardstick measures a handful of skin-

clad hunters against Chicago, Los Angeles, and Caracas, and finds one group no more "diverse" than the other?

A considerable amount of pessimism is built into this species-based notion of diversity. Nearly all change on such a scale is change for the worse—especially human-mediated change. Change involves stress, and stress causes extinctions; each extinction is another pock in the skin of an edenic original. This original is frozen in time; more often than not, it is defined as the blissful instant just prior to the arrival of the first human being. In fact, the only way to re-create this instant, and restore biodiversity to its greatest possible richness, would be to arrange for every human being on earth to drop dead tomorrow.

This is not to say that cities are better than coral reefs, or that binary codes are an improvement on genetic ones, but only that "biodiversity" cannot adequately account for the phenomenon of *Homo sapiens*.

Maybe it's time to give up the notion of human beings as intruders, trampers, and destroyers. We are all of these, there's no doubt about it, but they are not all we are. And yet the same mind-set that interprets human history as little more than a string of increasingly lurid ecological crimes also insists that our species represents the last, best hope of "saving" the planet. Is it any wonder that the future looks bleak?

Here we have the essential Puritan outlook disguised as science—human beings, the sinners, occupy center stage, and cannot move a muscle without risking the direst consequences in a cosmic drama. At stake is the fate of the world; thousands of innocents (other species) rely on the shaky powers of human foresight. One false step—and our ancestors, as we know, have taken almost nothing but false steps—and our dwelling place may be mutilated beyond redemption.

This outlook is realistic in its recognition that our species is different in kind from all others, as any visitor from outer space would admit; it is obnoxious in the limits it places on the organic experiment. Human consciousness—whether in the form of Bach chorales, three-masted schooners, or microwave communications—cannot, in this view, contribute to biodiversity, except by staying as far out of the picture as possible, so as to avoid tainting still-intact landscapes with unnatural influences. The possibility that chorales and schooners might represent positive contributions to biotic richness—that they might, just as much as any rain-forest orchid, embody the special genius of this planet—is never admitted. Somehow an agreement has been reached to exclude whatever is human from the sum of biodiversity—as if the Apollo landings, for example, do not represent an astonishing breakthrough *in strictly biological terms*.

This view has a certain legitimacy as long as its definition of diversity is narrowly chromosomal, or species-based. Those environments richest in species—the tropical forests and the warmwater seas—are, from its perspective, the most diverse and complex. But I would

argue that this definition, though accurate enough for most of the history of life, became obsolete about a half million years ago, when *Homo sapiens* came on the scene. This creature released organic change from its age-old dependence on genetic recombination and harnessed it to new energies—culture, symbolic language, and imagination. As is becoming more and more evident, nothing has been the same since.

BEING RELUCTANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THIS FACT, ecologists, biologists, and environmentalists have had fits trying to introduce our species into their models of the natural world. These models are based on the idea of balance, or equilibrium, wherein each variety of plant or animal plays a limited, genetically prescribed role in the cycling of materials and energy. The roles are not absolutely fixed—natural selection, by sorting and resorting chromosomes, can adapt lines of descent to new ones—but change, by and large, is assumed to be gradual, and millions of years can pass without any notable restructuring of communities.

Human beings cannot be worked into such models. One cannot look at human beings and predict what they will eat, or where they will live, or how many of their children a given landscape will support. If they inhabit a forest, they may burn it down and raise vegetables, or flood it and plant rice, or sell it to a pulp-and-paper manufacturer. They may think of anything; the life their parents led is not a reliable blueprint, but merely a box with a thousand exits. Moralists in search of instructive contrasts will sometimes idealize primitive societies, claiming that they deliberately live “in balance” with their environments, but these examples don’t stand up to scrutiny. The Massachusetts Indians, for instance, though sometimes presented as sterling conservationists, were the descendants of aboriginal American hunters who appear to have pursued a whole constellation of Ice Age mammals to extinction (including several species of horses). When, in historical times, they were offered metal fishhooks, knives, and firearms, they didn’t say, “Thanks, but we prefer rock-chipping.”

The revelation that we are not like other creatures in certain crucial respects is an ancient one, and may be nearly as old as humanity; it probably contributed to the idea, central to several major religions, that we inhabit a sort of permanent exile. Until recently, however, we could still imagine ourselves encompassed by, if not entirely contained in, landscapes dominated by nonhuman forces—weather, infectious illness, growing seasons, light and darkness, and so forth. This is no longer so; today most human beings live in artificial wildernesses called cities, and don’t raise the food they eat, or know where the water they drink fell as rain. A sort of vertigo has set in—a feeling that a rhythm has been upset, and that soon nothing will be left of the worlds that made us. This feeling is substantiated by population curves, ocean

pollution, chemical changes in the earth’s atmosphere, vanishing wildlife, mountains of garbage, and numerous other signs that anyone can read. The nineteenth-century conservation movement, which sought to preserve landscapes for largely aesthetic reasons, has become absorbed in the twentieth-century environmental movement, which insists that more is at stake than postcard views. We are, it argues, near to exceeding the carrying capacity of our planet’s natural systems, systems whose importance to us will become very obvious when they begin to wobble and fail.

These are not empty warnings. Human communities can and occasionally do self-destruct by overstraining their resource bases. Historical examples include the Easter Islanders, the lowland Maya, and some of the classical-era city-dwellers of the Middle East and North Africa. But if we set aside the equilibrium-based models of the ecologists, and do not limit ourselves to species-bound notions of diversity—in other words, if we seek to include human beings in the landscape of nature, rather than make them outcasts—what sort of picture do we get of the phenomenon of life?

The difference between life and nonlife, according to the biologists, is a matter of degree. A glass of seawater, for instance, contains many of the same materials as a condor (or a green turtle). What makes one alive and the other not are the varying chemical pathways those materials follow. The glass of water contains few internal boundaries, and gases diffuse freely across its surface. In the condor, in contrast, a much more complex array of reactions is in progress, reactions that maintain certain molecular-energy potentials in an oddly elevated state, even though the bird as a whole shows a net energy loss. In other words, both the condor and the glass of water cycle energy, but in the condor the energy goes to support a level of complexity not present in the water.

Perhaps the condor is more like a candle flame—both burn energy, and that burning keeps certain patterns intact. The condor, like the candle, can burn out. But although one can relight the candle, one cannot relight the condor—it is too delicately tuned, too dependent on various internal continuities.

As useful as these distinctions are, they tend to blur under increased magnification. A virus, for instance, is more condorlike than flamelike, because the energy and materials it draws from its surroundings reappear not primarily as heat, light, and simple oxides but as viral protein and nucleic acids—complex substances that the flame cannot construct but only disassemble. And yet most students agree that viruses are not alive, because they cannot build these substances without the aid of the machineries inside a living cell. A certain level of independence is necessary—living things, according to this definition, not only must transform simple compounds into more varied and characteristic ones but also must be able to do so in an atmosphere of nonlife.

LIFE, FOR THE BIOLOGISTS, IS AN UPHILL OR RETROGRADE process—it adds order and complexity to environments whose overall tendency is toward diffusion and disorder. It captures energies released by decay and exploits them for growth and rebirth. It is startlingly anomalous in this respect: so far as we know, it occurs nowhere but on the surface of this planet, and even here its appearance seems to have been a one-time-only event; though many lifelike substances have been produced inside sterile glassware, none has ever quickened into veritable beasthood.

The evidence suggests that life continued to fructify and elaborate itself for several billion years after its appearance. The milestones along the way—the nucleated cell, photosynthesis, sexual reproduction, multicellularity, the internal skeleton, the invasion of the land and sky, and so forth—are usually interpreted as advances, because they added additional layers of complexity, interconnection, and ordered interaction to existing systems. This drama did not proceed without crises—photosynthesis, for instance, probably wiped out entire ecosystems by loading the atmosphere with a deadly poison, free oxygen—but life as a whole laughed at such insults, and continued on its protean way.

If we believe that all life—in contrast to rocks and gases—shares a certain quality of sensitivity, or self-awareness, then *Homo sapiens* was an astonishing and wholly unpredictable leap forward in this respect, because human beings manifested an idea of personhood never before achieved. The exact moment of this discovery is of course problematic, as are most events in evolution, but I would date it from early summer about 60,000 years ago, when a group of Neanderthals living in present-day Iraq lost one of their members, dug a grave for him in the Shanidar Cave of the Zagros Mountain highlands, placed his body inside, and covered it with yarrow blossoms, cornflowers, hyacinths, and mallows. Here, in a gesture of remarkable grace, a group of living creatures betrayed an awareness that creatureliness is a pose, a pose that can't be held forever.

The poignancy of this moment is profound. Though the idea is startling to consider, all the evidence suggests that most of life's history has unfolded unobserved, so to speak. I would bet that the dinosaurs, for instance, did not know that they were reptiles, or that they had faces like their neighbors, or that they once hatched from eggs like their offspring.

Consciousness. Mind. Insight. Here are qualities that, if not exclusively human, seem appallingly rudimentary elsewhere. Primitive peoples distributed them throughout their worlds; we moderns hold to stricter standards of evidence. Does a cloud yearn, for instance, to drop rain? Is a seed eager to sprout?

The irruption of thoughtfulness that our species represents is not inexplicable in Darwinian terms. Once our apelike and erect ancestors began using weapons, hunt-

ing large animals, and sharing the spoils, the ability to develop plans and communicate them acquired considerable survival value, and was genetically enhanced. This ability, and the tripling in brain weight that accompanied it, turned out to be one of the most revolutionary experiments in the history of gene-sorting. It was as if Nature, after wearing out several billion years tossing off new creatures like nutshells, looked up to see that one had come back, and was eyeing her strangely.

The distance between that moment and today is barely a hiccup, geologically speaking. We are genetically almost indistinguishable from those bear-roasters and mammoth-stickers. But the world is a different place now. Grad students in ecology, for instance, are expected to do a certain amount of "fieldwork," and many of them have to travel hundreds and even thousands of miles before they consider themselves far enough from classrooms to be in the field.

Plainly, our planet contained vast opportunities for creatures willing to shape it consciously toward their ends. The way was clear; we know of no other species that has divined what we've been up to, or has a mind to object. What seems simple to us is far beyond them; it's almost as if we move so fast that we are invisible, and they are still trying to pretend—without much success—that the world is the same as it was before we arrived.

This speed on the uptake appears to be the chief advantage that cultural adaptation has over genetic. When human beings encounter new circumstances, adaptation rarely depends on which individuals are genetically best suited to adjust, passing on their abilities more successfully than others and producing subsequent generations better adapted to the new order. No, human beings tend to cut the loop short by noticing the new, puzzling over it, telling their friends, and attempting to find out immediately whether it is edible, combustible, domesticable, or whatever. In this way we develop traditions that are immaterial, so to speak, in that they evolve on a track largely disengaged from the double helix.

This talent for endless jabber and experiment, and the pooling of useful knowledge it makes possible, means that human beings, unlike orangutans or condors, operate not primarily as individuals scattered over a landscape but as shareholders in a common fund of acquired skills, many of them the work of previous generations. This fund is extraordinarily deep and sophisticated, even among the most isolated bands of hunter-gatherers; when, as in recent times, it has included experience accumulated by thousands or even millions of forebears, it has enabled our species to become the quickest-acting agent of change in life's history. In fact, we might sensibly think of the human species not as five billion distinct selves but as five billion nodes in a single matrix, just as the human body is more commonly considered a unit than an accumulation of cells.

If life, as before noted, is a paradoxical chemical pro-

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cess by which order arises from disorder, and a movement toward uniformity produces more-complex local conditions, then human enterprise, though full of disasters for other species, is clearly not outside the main line of development. Equatorial rain forests, for instance, are probably the most diverse and multifaceted communities of species on earth. But are they more densely stuffed with highly refined codes and labels than, say, the Library of Congress? Long ago certain moths learned to communicate over as much as two miles of thick woods by releasing subtle chemicals that prospective mates could detect at levels measured in parts per million; today a currency broker in Tokyo can pick up a phone and hear accurate copies of sounds vocalized a split second earlier by a counterpart on the other side of the world. Which system of signals is more sensitive and flexible?

I AM CONCERNED, AS IS OBVIOUS, WITH AN IMAGE—THE image of our species as a vast, featureless mob of yahoos mindlessly trampling this planet's most ancient and delicate harmonies. This image, which is on its way to becoming an article of faith, is not a completely inaccurate description of present conditions in some parts of the world, but it portrays the human presence as a sort of monolithic disaster, when in fact *Homo sapiens* is the crown of creation, if by creation we mean the explosion of earthly vitality and particularity long ago ignited by a weak solution of amino acids mixing in sunlit waters. Change—dramatic, wholesale change—is one of the most reliable constants of this story. To say that the changes we have brought, and will continue to bring, are somehow alien to the world, and are within a half inch of making its “natural” continuance impossible, displays some contempt, I think, for the forces at work, along with a large dose of inverted pride. Who are we, for instance, to say what's possible and what isn't? Have we already glimpsed the end? Where exactly did things go awry? It's useful to remember that just yesterday our main concern was finding something to eat.

I prefer to suppose that we will be here awhile, and that such abilities as we have, though unprecedented in certain respects, are not regrettable. The human mind, for instance, could never have set itself the task of preserving rare species if earlier minds had not learned how to distinguish light from darkness, or coordinate limbs, or identify mates. Now that we think we know something about our immediate neighborhood, we are beginning to realize what a rare quality life is, and if we think of its multibillion-year history on earth as a sort of gradual awakening of matter, we must conclude that the dawning of human consciousness represents one of the most extraordinary sunrises on record. Is it any wonder, then, that the world is changing?

Perhaps because we have become so expert at interrogating our surroundings, we tremble a little at our own shadows. God, for instance, has become almost a fugi-

tive. We have disassembled the atom; we have paced off the galaxies; He doesn't figure in our equations.

Maybe it would be useful at this point to compare our common birthplace to a fertile hen's egg. Nearly everyone has seen the delicate tracery of blood vessels that begins to spread across the yolk of such an egg within a few hours of laying. Before long a tiny pump starts to twitch rhythmically, and it drives a bright scarlet fluid through these vessels. The egg doesn't know that it is on its way to becoming a chicken. Chickens, for the egg, lie somewhere on the far side of the beginning of time. And yet the egg couldn't be better equipped to make a chicken out of itself.

I would argue that our planet, like the egg, is on a mission of sorts. We don't know what that mission is any more than the nascent nerve cells in the egg know why they are forming a network. All we know is that things are changing rapidly and dramatically.

Today many believe that these changes are often for the worse, and represent a fever or virus from which the body of life will emerge crippled and scarred. We look back with longing on a time, only a moment ago, when the human presence barely dimpled the landscape—when the yolk, so to speak, was at its creamiest, and no angry little eye-spots signaled an intent to devour everything.

I'm not persuaded by this picture—I think it arises from a mistaken belief that the outlines of earthly perfection are already evident. It has inspired a small army of doomsayers—if we burn the forests of the Amazon, we are told, our planet's lungs will give out, and we will slowly asphyxiate. Surely we have better, more practical reasons for not burning them than to stave off universal catastrophe. I can easily imagine similar arguments that would have required the interior of North America to remain empty of cities—and yet I don't think this continent is a poorer place now than it was 20,000 years ago. The more convinced we are that our species is a plague, the more we are obliged to yearn for disasters.

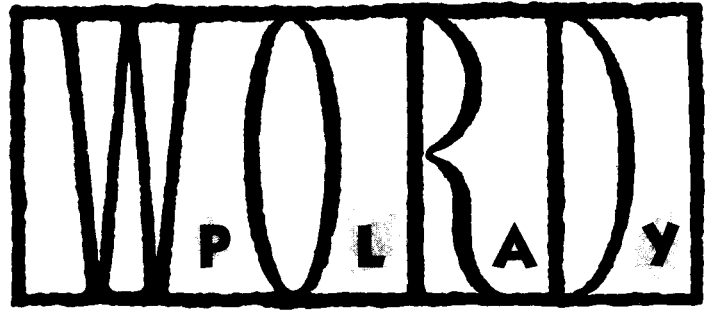
Students of historical psychology have noticed that the end of the world is always at hand. For the Puritan preachers it was to take the form of divine wrath, and they warned that the Wampanoag war was only a foretaste. The Yankees saw it coming in the flood of nineteenth-century immigrants, who meant to drown true Americanism. Today we are more likely to glimpse it in canned aerosols, poisoned winds, and melting ice caps.

Curiously enough, the end of the world always *is* at hand—the world dies and is reborn on a daily basis. A fertile hen's egg is never today what it was yesterday, or will be tomorrow. Few would deny that the effort to preserve and protect as many as possible of the millions of species now existing represents a fresh and heartening expansion of human ambitions. But to suppose that earthly diversity is past its prime, and that a strenuous program of self-effacement is the best contribution our species has left to offer, is neither good biology nor good history. □

VIRGULE

What I love about this little leaning mark
is how it divides
without divisiveness. The left
or bottom side prying that choice up or out,
the right or top side pressing down upon
its choice: either/or,
his/her. Sometimes called a *slash* (too harsh), a *slant*
(a little dizzy, but the Dickinson association
nice: "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—"), *solidus* (sounding
too much like a Roman legionnaire
of many campaigns),
or a *separatrix* (reminding one of a sexual
variant). No, I like *virgule*. I like the word
and I like the function: "Whichever is appropriate
may be chosen to complete the sense."
There is something democratic
about that, grown-up; a long
and slender walking stick set against the house.
Virgule: it feels good in your mouth.
Virgule: its foot on backwards, trochaic, that's OK, American.
Virgule: you could name your son that,
or your daughter *Virgula*. I'm sorry now
I didn't think to give my daughter such a name
though I doubt that she and/or
her mother would share that thought.

—Thomas Lux



RUMPELSTILTSKIN

"Your name is Rumpelstiltskin!" cried
The Queen. "It's not," he lied. "I lied
The time you heard me say it was."
"I never heard you. It's a guess,"

She lied. He lied: "My name is Zed."
She told the truth: "You're turning red,
Zed." He said: "That's not my name!"
"You're turning red, though, all the same."

"Liar!" he cried: "I'm turning blue."
And this was absolutely true.
And then he tore himself in two,
As liars tend to have to do.

—Glyn Maxwell

-ESQUE

As wonderfully ornate and un-
necessary as a handlebar
moustache, or a handkerchief

just so in an old man's
breast pocket, not an empty
decoration but a ruffle

and flourish, a flair
for the dramatic, blessed
excess—like the white-haired

gentleman who has shined his shoes
and put on a coat and tie
to buy groceries—

and, like the intricate
orthography that spells out
our history with such pomp

and circumstance, reveals
the most delicate and indelicate
details of where we've been—

silent letters are as crucial as air
in a soufflé: imagine a ballet
dancer caught flat-footed

in an *arabesque*, or the jokes
like lead balloons if the show
were only *burlesque*—the echoes

we hear in *grotesque*,
the ancient caves we painted
our way out of,

are the voices of those
so eager for us to hear
what they had to say

they invented the alphabet
to carry their words light-
years into the heavens, here.

—Sharon Bryan

A Short Story



The People We Marry

by Tim O'Brien

WHEN JOHN WADE WAS A BOY OF TWELVE, HIS hobby was magic. In the basement, where he practiced in front of a full-length mirror, he made his mother's silk scarves change color. He cut his father's tie with scissors and restored it whole. He placed a penny in the palm of his hand, made his hand into a fist, made the penny into a white mouse. This was not true magic; it was trickery. But John Wade sometimes pretended otherwise, because he was a kid then, and because pretending was the thrill of magic, and because for a time what seemed to happen became a happening in itself. He was a dreamer. He liked watching his hands in the mirror, imagining how someday he would perform much grander magic, tigers becoming giraffes, beautiful girls levitating like angels in the high yellow spotlights—naked maybe, no wires or strings, just floating there.

AT FOURTEEN, WHEN HIS FATHER DIED, JOHN DID the tricks in his head. He'd lie in bed at night imagining a big yellow door, and after a few minutes the door would jerk open and his father would walk in and take off his hat and sit in a rocking chair beside the bed. "Well, I'm back," his father would say, "but don't tell your mom—she'd kill me." He'd wink and grin. "So what's new?"

And then they'd talk for a while, quietly, catching up on things. Like cutting a tie and restoring it whole.

HE MET KATHY IN THE AUTUMN OF 1967. HE WAS a senior at the University of Minnesota. She was a freshman.

The trick then was to make her love him and never stop.

The urgency came from fear, mostly. He didn't want to lose her. Sometimes he'd jerk awake at night, dreaming she'd left him, but when he tried to explain this to her,

Kathy laughed and told him to cut it out, she'd never leave, and in any case thinking that way was destructive, it was negative and unhealthy.

John thought it over for several days. "You're right," he said, "but it still worries me. Things go wrong. Things don't always last."

"We're not *things*," she said.

"But it can happen."

"Not with us."

John shrugged and looked away. He was picturing his father's white casket. "Well, maybe you're right," he said, "but how do we know? People lose each other."

IN EARLY DECEMBER HE BEGAN SPYING ON HER. HE felt some guilt at first, which bothered him, but he also found a peculiar satisfaction in it. Like magic, he thought—a quick, powerful rush. He knew things he shouldn't know. Intimate little items: what she ate for breakfast, the occasional cigarette she smoked. Finesse and deception, those were his specialties, and the spying came easily. In the evenings he'd station himself outside her dormitory, staring up at the light in her room; later, when the light went off, he'd patiently

track her to the student union or the library or wherever else she went. The issue wasn't trust or distrust. It was how the world was. He'd sometimes make dates with her, and then cancel,

and then wait to see how she used the time. He looked for signs of betrayal: the way she smiled at people, the way she carried herself around other men. In a way, he loved her best when he was spying; it opened up a hidden world, with new perspectives and new things to admire. On Thursday afternoons he'd stake out women's basketball practice, watching from under the bleachers, taking quiet note of her energy and enthusiasm and slim brown legs. As an athlete, he decided, Kathy wasn't much, but he got a kick out of the little war dance she'd do whenever a free throw dropped in. Her competitive spirit made him proud; she was a knockout in gym shorts.

*Magic was his life.
His marriage was a trick he did not
want to explain*

Down inside, of course, John realized that the spying wasn't proper, yet he couldn't bring himself to stop. In part, he thought, Kathy had brought it on herself: she had a personality that lured him on. She was fiercely private. She was fiercely independent. They'd be at a movie together, or at a party, and she'd simply vanish; she'd go out for a pack of gum, or so she'd say, and forget to return. It wasn't thoughtlessness, exactly, but it wasn't thoughtful either. Without reason, usually without warning, she'd wander away while they were browsing in a shop or a bookstore, and a moment later, when he glanced up, she'd be cleanly and absolutely gone, as if plucked off the planet.

That fast—here, then gone—and he wouldn't see her again for hours, or until he found her holed up in a back carrel of the library. All this put a little chill in his heart. He understood her need to be alone, to reserve time for herself, but too often she carried things to an extreme that made him wonder.

The spying helped. No great discoveries, but at least he knew the score.

And it was fun, too—a challenge.

Occasionally he'd spend whole days just tailing her. The trick was to be patient, to stay alert, and he liked the bubbly sensation it gave him to trace her movements from spot to spot. He liked melting into crowds, positioning himself in doorways, anticipating her route as she walked across campus. It was sleight-of-body work, or sleight-of-mind, and over those cold winter days he was carried along by the powerful, secret thrill of gaining access to a private life. Hershey bars, for instance—Kathy was addicted, she couldn't resist. He learned about her friends, her teachers, her little habits and routines. He watched her shop for his birthday present. He was there in the drugstore when she bought her first diaphragm.

"It's weird," Kathy told him once, "how well you *know* me."

"Well, that's love," he said.

"But I'm still amazed. Sometimes I feel like we're one person, almost. Like you can read my mind."

John took her in his arms. "A miracle," he said.

TO HIS SURPRISE, KATHY KEPT LOVING HIM, SHE didn't stop, and over the course of the spring semester they made plans to be married and have children and live in a big old house in Minneapolis. For John it was a happy time. Except for rare occasions, he gave up spying; he was able to confide in her about his ambitions and dreams. First law school, he told

her, then a job with the party, then maybe a run for the state senate, and then, when all the pieces were in place, he'd go for something big. Lieutenant governor, maybe. The U.S. Senate. He had the sequence mapped out; he knew what he wanted.

Kathy listened carefully, nodding at times. Her eyes were green and smart, watchful. "Sounds fine," she said, "but what's it all for?"

"For?"

"I mean, *why*?"

John hesitated. "Because—you know—because it's what I want."

"Which is what?"

"Just the usual, I guess. Change things. Make things happen."

Kathy lay on her back, in bed, frowning at the ceiling. It was late April of 1968. She was eighteen years old.

"Well, I still don't get it," she said. "The way you talk, it sounds calculating or something. Too cold. Planning every tiny detail."

"And that's bad?"

"No. Not exactly."

"What, then?"

She made a shifting motion with her shoulders. "I don't know, it just seems strange, sort of. How you've figured everything out, all the angles, except what it's *for*."

"For us," he said. "I love you, Kath."

"But it feels—I shouldn't say this—it feels manipulating."



John turned and looked at her. Eighteen years old, yes, but something flat and skeptical condensed in her eyes, something terrifying. She returned his gaze without backing off. She was hard to fool. Again, briefly, he was struck by a sudden fear of losing her, of bungling things, and for a long while he tried to explain how wrong she was. Nothing sinister, he said. He talked about leading a good life, doing good things for the world. Yet even as he spoke, John realized he was not telling the full truth. Politics *was* manipulation. Like a magic show: invisible wires and secret trapdoors. He imagined placing a city in the palm of his hand, making his hand into a fist, making the city into a happier place. Manipulation, that was the fun of it.

HE GRADUATED IN JUNE OF 1968. THERE WAS A war in progress, which was beyond manipulation, and five months later he found himself at the bottom of an irrigation ditch south of Chu Lai. The muck was waist-deep; he couldn't move. People were committing murder, other people were making odd huffing noises, and the trick then was not to die.

HIS LETTERS FROM KATHY WERE CHEERFUL AND newsy, full of daily detail, and he found comfort in her chitchat about family and friends. She told funny stories about her sister, Pat, about her teachers and roommates and basketball team. She rarely mentioned the war. Though concerned for his safety, Kathy also had doubts about his motives, his reasons for being there.

"I just hope it's not part of your political game plan," she wrote. "All those dead people, John, they don't vote."

The letter hurt him. He couldn't understand how she could think such things. It was true, of course, that he sometimes imagined returning home a hero, looking spiffy in a crisp new uniform, smiling and waving at the crowds and carrying himself with appropriate decorum. And it was true, too, that uniforms got people elected. Even so, he felt abused.

"I love you," he wrote back, "and I hope someday you'll believe in me."

HE WAS NOT MUCH OF A SOLDIER, BARELY COMPETENT, but he managed to hang on without embarrassing himself. He kept his head down under fire, avoided trouble, trusted in luck to keep him alive. By and large he was well liked among the men in Bravo Company. In the evenings, after the foxholes were dug, he'd sometimes perform card tricks for his new buddies, simple stuff mostly, and he liked the grins and bunched eyebrows as he transformed

the Ace of Spades into the Queen of Hearts, the Queen of Hearts into a snapshot of Ho Chi Minh. The guys were impressed. Sorcerer, they called him: "Sorcerer's our man." And for John Wade, who had always considered himself a loner, the nickname was like a special badge, an emblem of belonging and brotherhood, something to take pride in. A nifty sound, too—Sorcerer. It suggested certain powers, certain rare skills and aptitudes.

The men in Bravo Company seemed to agree.

In January, when a kid named Henderson got shot through the stomach, John knelt down and pressed a towel against the hole and said the usual things: "Hang tight, easy now." Henderson nodded. For a while he was quiet, flickering in and out, and then suddenly he giggled and tried to sit up.

"Hey, no sweat," he said, "I'm aces, I'm golden." He kept rocking, he wouldn't lie still. "Don't mean zip, man, no sweat at all."

Then his eyes shut. He almost smiled.

"Go on," he said. "Do your magic."

In Vietnam, where superstition governed, there was the fundamental need to believe—believing just to believe—and over time the men came to trust in Sorcerer's powers. Jokes, at first. Little bits of lingo. "Listen up," somebody would say, "tonight we're invisible," and after a second somebody else would say, "That's affirmative, Sorcerer's got this magic dust, gonna sprinkle us good, gonna make us into spooks." It was a game they played. Partly tongue in cheek, partly hopeful. At night, before heading out on ambush, the men would go through the ritual of lining up to touch Sorcerer's helmet, filing by as if at communion, the faces dark and young and solemn. They'd ask his advice on matters of fortune; they'd tell each other stories about his incredible good luck, how he never got a scratch, not once, not even that time back in December when the mortar round dropped right next to his foxhole. Amazing, they'd say. Man's plugged into the spirit world.

John encouraged the mystique. It was useful, he discovered, to cultivate a slightly reserved demeanor, to stay silent for long stretches of time. When pressed, he'd put on a quick display of his powers, doing a trick or two, maybe offering a vague prophecy of things to come. "Wicked vibes," he'd say, "wicked day ahead," and then he'd shake his head and gaze out across the paddies. He couldn't go wrong. Wickedness was everywhere.

"I'm the company witch doctor," he wrote Kathy. "These guys listen to me. They actually *believe* in this shit."

KATHY DID NOT WRITE BACK FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. And then she sent only a postcard: "One's born every minute, I guess, but be careful with the hocus-pocus. One of these days you'll make me disappear."

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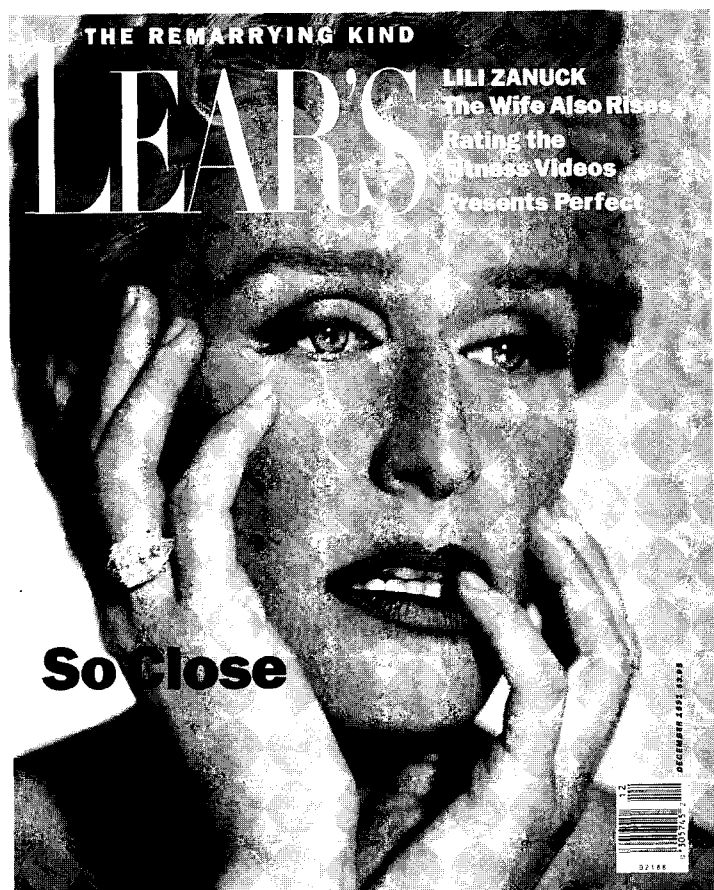
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The card was signed "Kath." There were no endearments, no funny stories.

Instantly, John felt the old terrors rise up again, all the ugly possibilities. He couldn't shut them off; even in bright daylight the pictures kept blowing through his head. Dark bedrooms, for instance. Kathy's diaphragm. What he wanted was to spy on her again—the wanting was almost a craving—but all he could do was wait. At night his blood seemed to bubble. He couldn't stop wondering. In the third week of February, when a letter finally arrived, he detected a new coolness in her tone, a new distance and formality. She talked about a movie she'd seen, an art gallery she'd visited, a terrific Spanish beer she'd discovered. His imagination filled in the details.

MARCH WAS a wretched month. Kathy was one problem, the war another. Two men were lost to land mines; a third was shot through the neck; Henderson died in the hospital.

And the pressures did not let up. In the middle of the month Bravo Company was chopped into a string of hamlets in the densely wooded foothills northwest of Chu Lai—a spooky area, full of ghosts—and morale was low. As they plodded from village to village, the men talked in low voices about how the magic had worn off, how Sorcerer had lost contact with the underworld. They seemed to blame him. Nothing direct, just a general standoffishness. There were no more requests for tricks. No banter, no jokes. As the days piled up, John felt increasingly cut off from the men, cut off from Kathy and his own future. A stranded sensation—he felt totally lost. At times he wondered about his mental health. The internal terrain had gone blurry; he couldn't get his bearings.

"Something's wrong," he wrote Kathy. "Don't do this to me. I'm not blind—Sorcerer can see."

She wrote back fast: "You scare me."

And then for many days he received no letters at all, not even a postcard, and the war kept squeezing in on him. The notion of the finite took hold and would not let go.

In the second week of April a lieutenant named Reinhart was shot dead by sniper fire. He'd been eating a candy bar. He fell in the grass under a straggly old palm tree, his lips dark with chocolate. The day was bright and humid, very hot, but John Wade found himself shivering. The cold came from inside him. A deep freeze, he thought, and then suddenly he felt something he'd never felt before, a force so violent it seemed to pick him up by

the shoulders. It was rage, in part, but it was also humiliation and illness and despair, all kinds of things.

For a few seconds he hugged himself, frozen there, and then he was moving.

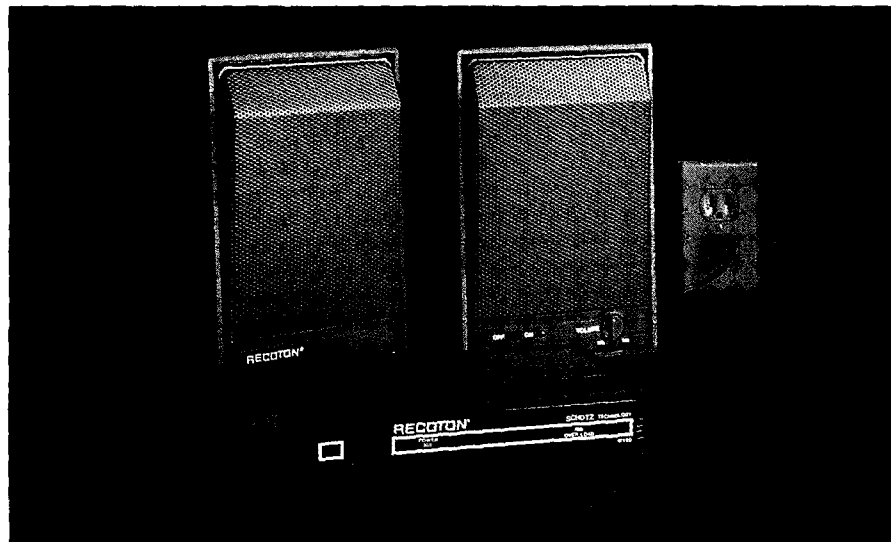
He made no real decision. He'd lost touch with his own body, his own sense of volition, and in the hours afterward he would remember how he seemed to glide toward the enemy position—not running, just a fast, winging, disconnected glide—circling in from behind, not thinking at all, slipping through a tangle of deep brush and keeping low and letting the glide take him up to a little man in black trousers and a black shirt. He would remember the man turning. He would remember their eyes colliding. Certain other

things he would remember only dimly: how he was carried forward by the glide, how his lungs seemed full of ashes, how at one point his rifle muzzle came up against the man's cheekbone. At that instant his memory would go wet and red. He would feel an immense pressure in his stomach; he would see Kathy's flat eyes reproaching him for the many things he had done and not done; he would review himself as a boy—at his father's funeral—fourteen years old, and scared, and wearing a necktie and a new white shirt; he would smell the terrible flower smells; he would remember his mother weeping, the minister saying words that made him want to search for



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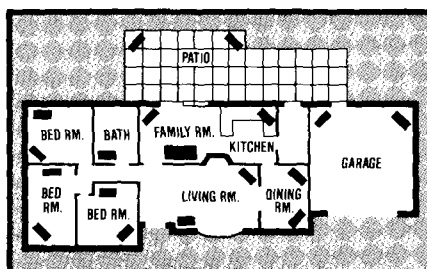
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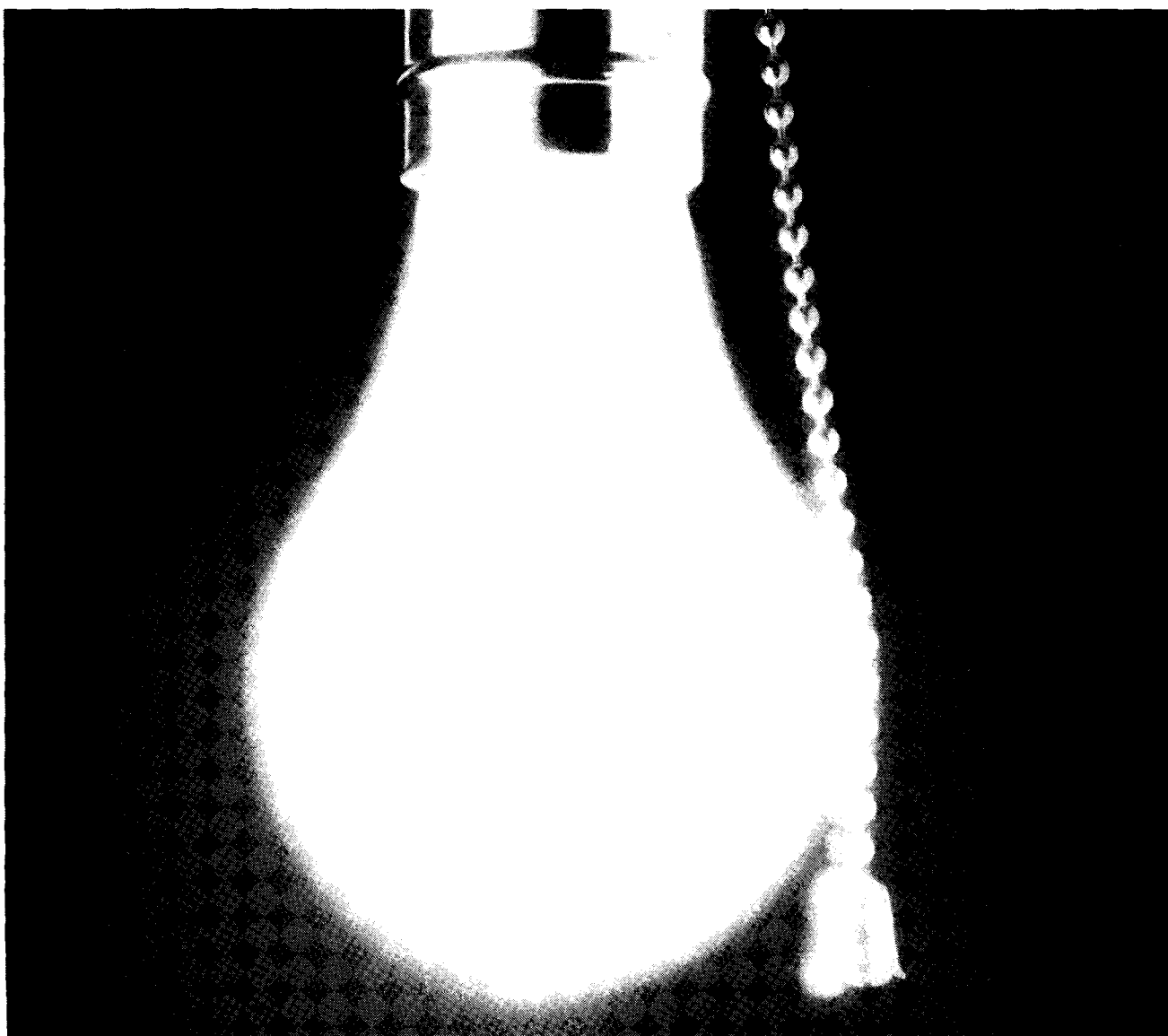


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In a May 13th cover story, Forbes told its readers that union success in winning control of the work place has meant hiring more and more supervisors. Instead of people who actually do the work.

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his father in the pews and aisles as if for a lost nickel. At his right shoulder he felt a fierce shaking. He heard no sound at all, none that he would remember, and everything was wet and red.

Afterward the guys in Bravo Company couldn't stop talking about Sorcerer's new trick.

They went on and on.

"Poof," one of them said. "No lie, just like that—*poof!*"

At dusk they dragged the sniper's body into a nearby hamlet. An audience of villagers was summoned at gunpoint. A rope was then secured to the dead man's feet, another to his wrists, and just before nightfall Sorcerer and his assistants performed an act of levitation, hoisting the body high into the trees, into the dark, where it floated under a fiery red moon.

JOHNNY RETURNED home in November of 1970. At the Seattle airport he put in a long-distance call to Kathy but then chuckled and hung up on the second ring.

The flight to Minneapolis was lost time. Jet lag, maybe, but something else, too. He felt dangerous. In the gray skies over North Dakota he went back into the lavatory, where he took off his uniform and put on a sweater and slacks, and then carefully appraised himself in the mirror. His eyes looked unsound. A little tired, a little frayed. After a moment he winked at himself. "Hey, Sorcerer," he murmured. "How's tricks?"

In the Twin Cities that evening he took a bus over to the university. He carried his duffel to the plaza outside Kathy's dorm, found a concrete bench, and sat down to wait. It was shortly after nine o'clock. Her window was dark, which seemed appropriate, and for a couple of hours he compiled mental lists of the various places she might be, the things she might be doing. Nothing wholesome came to mind. His thoughts then gathered around the topics he would address once the occasion was right.

Loyalty, for example. Steadfastness and love and fidelity and trust and all the related issues of sticking power.

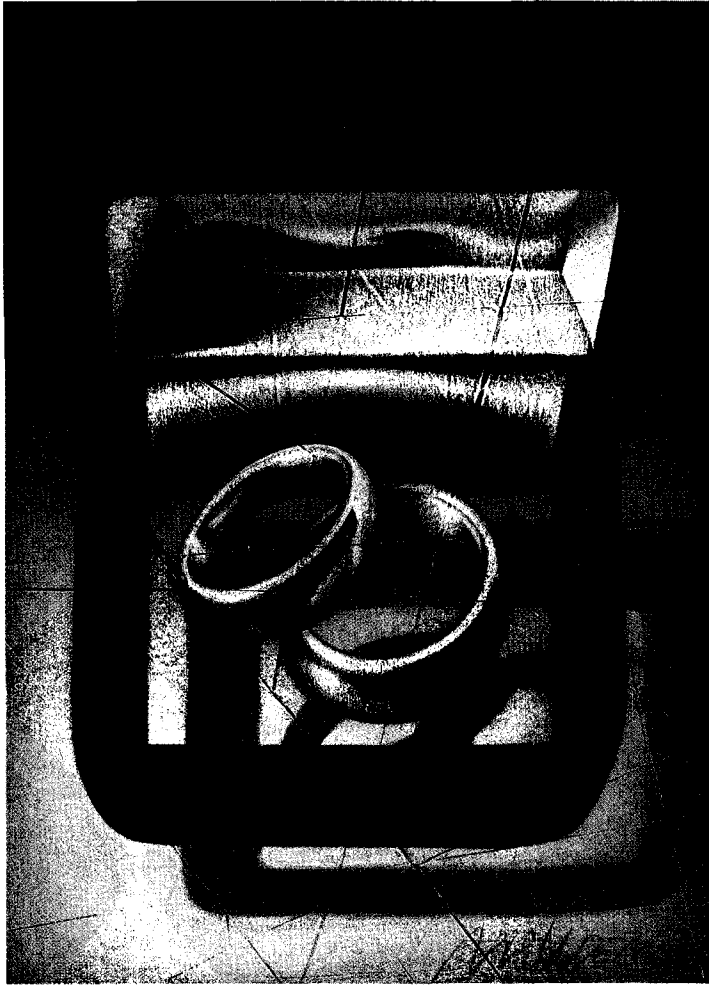
By midnight he'd worked himself up. He was yelling in his head, half dizzy, and he almost missed her when she turned up the sidewalk to her dorm.

She carried a canvas tote bag over her shoulder, a sack of groceries in her right arm. She'd lost some weight, mostly at the hips, and in the dark she seemed to move with a quicker, nimbler, more impulsive stride. It made him uneasy. After she'd gone inside, John sat very still for a time, not quite there, not quite anywhere; then he picked up his duffel and walked the seven blocks to a hotel.

He was still gliding.

That dizzy, disconnected sensation stayed with him all night. Exotic fevers swept through his blood; he couldn't get traction on his dreams. Twice he woke up and stood under the shower, letting it beat against his shoulders, but even then the dream-reels kept unwinding. Crazy stuff: Kathy shoveling rain off a sidewalk; Kathy waving at him from the wing of an airplane. At one point, near dawn, he found himself curled up on the floor, wide awake, conversing with the dark. He was asking his father to please stop dying. Over and over he kept saying please, but his father wouldn't listen and wouldn't stop, he just kept dying, and so then a hard, killing rage rose up. He was

fourteen years old again—the funeral, the necktie pinching tight—and he wanted to kill everybody who was crying and everybody who wasn't. He wanted to kill the minister. He wanted to kill the choir and the skinny old lady at the organ. He wanted to kill the flowers. He wanted to grab a hammer and crawl into the casket and kill his father for dying. But he felt helpless; he didn't know where to start. After the service, while his mother slept, he'd gone down into the basement and practiced magic in front of the full-length mirror, making white mice disappear, reading minds that were no longer present, performing miracles of love and healing.



Now he felt only coldness.

When dawn came, he hiked over to Kathy's dorm and waited on the concrete bench. He wasn't sure what he wanted.

Around ten o'clock she came out and headed toward the classroom buildings. The routine hadn't changed. He followed her to the biology lab, then to the student union, then to the post office and bank and gymnasium. From his old spot under the bleachers he watched as she practiced her dribbling and free throws, which were much improved, and after lunch he spent a monotonous three hours in the library as she leaned over a fat gray psychology textbook. Nothing out of the ordinary. Several times, in fact, he came close to ending his vigil—just grabbing her, holding tight and never letting go. But near dark, when she closed her book, he couldn't resist tailing her across campus to a busy kiosk, where she bought a magazine, and then to a pizza joint on University Avenue, where she ordered a Tab and a small pepperoni.

He stationed himself at a bus stop outside. His eyes ached, and his heart, too—everything. Beneath all that, though, he felt the dull pain of indecision, a kind of puzzlement, a moral fatigue. At times he was struck by a fierce desire to believe that the suspicion was nothing but a demon in his head. Other times he wanted to believe the worst. He didn't know why. It was as though something inside him—his genes or his bone marrow—required the certainty of a confirmed betrayal: a witnessed kiss, a witnessed embrace. The facts would be absolute. In a dim way, only half admitted, John understood that the alternative was simply to love her, and to go on loving her, yet somehow the ambiguity of it all seemed intolerable. Nothing could ever be certain, not if he spied forever, because he would always face the threat of tomorrow's treachery, or next year's treachery, or the treachery implicit in all the years beyond that.

Besides, he liked spying. He was Sorcerer. He had the gift, the knack.

It was full dark when Kathy stepped outside. She passed directly behind him, so close he could smell the soaps and oils on her skin. Just briefly, he felt a curious jolt of guilt, almost shame, but for another ten minutes he tracked her back toward campus, watching as she paused to inspect the shop windows and Thanksgiving displays. At the corner of University and Oak she used a public telephone, mostly listening, laughing once; then she continued up toward the school. The evening had a crisp, leafy smell. Football weather, a cool mid-autumn Friday, and the streets were crowded with students and flower kids and lovers going arm in arm. Nobody knew. Their world was safe. All promises were infinite, all things endured, doubt was on some other planet. Neptune, he thought, which gave him pause. When he looked up, Kathy was gone.

For a few moments John had a hard time finding focus.

He scanned the sidewalks, shut his eyes briefly, and then turned and made his way back to her dorm.

He waited all night. He waited through dawn and into early morning.

By then he knew.

The knowledge was absolute. It was bone-deep and forever—pure knowing—but even so he waited. He was still there when she came up the sidewalk around noon. Arms folded, powerful, he stood on the steps and watched her move toward him.

THEY MARRIED ANYWAY.

It was an outdoor ceremony, in the discreetly landscaped yard of her family's house in a suburb west of the Twin Cities. Balloons had been tied to the trees and shrubs; the patio was decorated with Japanese lanterns and red carnations and crepe paper. Altogether, things went nicely. The minister talked about the shield of God's love, which warded off strife, and then recited—too theatrically, John thought—a short passage from First Corinthians. Oddly, though, it was not the solemn moment he had once imagined. At one point he glanced over at Kathy and grinned. "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge"—her eyes were green and bright. She wrinkled her nose. She grinned back at him—"and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains. . . ." A lawnmower droned a few houses down. A light breeze rippled across the yard, and spikes of dusty sunshine made the trees glow, and pink and white balloons danced on their little strings. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Then the minister led them through their vows.

They promised to be true to each other. They promised other things, too, and exchanged rings, and afterward Kathy's uncle opened the bar. Her mother gave them bed sheets. Her father presented them with the keys to an apartment in Minneapolis.

"It's scary," Kathy whispered, "how much I love you."

They drove away in a borrowed Chevy, to the St. Paul Ramada, where they honeymooned for several days on a package deal. The secrets were his. He would never tell. On the second morning Kathy asked if he had any misgivings, any second thoughts, and John shook his head and said no. He was Sorcerer, after all, and what was love without a little mystery?

They moved into the apartment just after Easter.

"We'll be happy," Kathy said. "I know it."

John laughed and carried her inside.

He would be vigilant. He would guard his advantage. He would go from year to year without letting on that there were tricks. □



FIRST ENCOUNTERS

GEORGE GORDON BYRON AND PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

IN THE EARLY spring of 1816 two English parties crossed the Channel and headed for Geneva. Lord Byron, barred from France for his radical politics, routed his carriage across Belgium and down the Rhine. Shelley's views were equally subversive but less well known; he traveled via Paris by hired vehicle with Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, their baby William, and Mary's stepsister, Claire Clairmont. Both poets were running from wives and domesticity, and Byron from bailiffs and scandal (his adored half-sister Augusta was expecting) as well. Byron was twenty-eight, Shelley twenty-three.

Shelley's Geneva venture was masterminded by Claire in her pursuit of Byron. In London she had introduced him to Shelley's poems, and Byron had greatly admired *Queen Mab*. So when, one morning after his arrival, he returned from a row on the lake and spotted the Shelley party walking along the *plage*, Byron plunged into the shallow water and splashed toward his fellow poet. It was a Childe Harold kind of gesture.

Would Shelley dine with him—alone? He would.

The evening was relaxed. Byron delighted in Shelley's candid narration of his unorthodox career. In the ensuing months the two households rented neighboring dwellings, and breakfasted, walked, and boated together. At night, in the drawing room of the Villa Diodati, they talked of macabre experiments and ghostly sensations. Mary had a nightmare about a poor student who constructed a hideous being that came to life. Claire got pregnant. Byron and Shelley embarked on a week-long sail that climaxed during a squall when the rudder broke and waves spilled into the boat. Byron took off his coat, Shelley followed, and both sat mute with arms crossed, waiting. Shelley could not swim. Aware that Byron knew it, he was consumed with humiliation that this man, who like Leander had crossed the Hellespont, might try to save him. The danger passed. Six years later, when on the coast of Italy another squall blew in, Byron was not there.

—Nancy Caldwell Sorel

Music



Little Time to Spare

What more could Mozart possibly have accomplished?

by Wilfrid Mellers

HAVING SPENT a year celebrating the event, we can hardly avoid knowing that Mozart died 200 years ago this past December 5. We came near to sinking beneath the spate of words putatively in his honor; but it is possible that, in retrospect, there may be lessons to learn. In particular it

may be rewarding to reflect on the difference between what his death meant in 1791 and what it meant to us in 1991, for the two meanings, though obviously related, are not identical.

Nobody denies that Mozart was the most phenomenal infant prodigy in the history of music; his musical life began

early, as it was to end. Whereas Haydn seemed to know intuitively that he had time at his disposal, and composed at a fairly mature age most of the works for which we now revere him, Mozart seemed to know that he had little time to spare. He was technically proficient by the time he entered his teens; by the age of twenty-five he had written some of the masterpieces of European music; in another ten years, having created and perfected a new kind of tragicomic opera and a new, quasi-dramatic instrumental form in his mature piano concertos, he was dead.

From Mozart's childhood pieces we would know that he was an unprecedented musical phenomenon but not that he was going to be one of the three supreme composers in European history. Indeed, a case can be made that the music Mendelssohn wrote before and during his teens is of greater intrinsic value than the music Mozart composed at the same age. But Mendelssohn, who didn't survive much longer than Mozart, relatively speaking declined, whereas Mozart fleshed out boyish miracles of technique (and, to a degree, of feeling) with artistic experience that in height and depth can only be described as Shakespearean. The parallel is apt not only in scales of value but also because Mozart was pre-eminently a dramatic and often explicitly theatrical composer. He and Handel were the supreme humanists of music, and his ambitious father had reared him in the Handelian traditions of heroic opera, the prime artistic convention of an age dedicated to the glory of man in the highest. A child of twelve producing operas about the triumphs and tribulations of kings and conquerors—men pretending to be gods, and usually discovering that they aren't—seems and in a sense is grotesque. Having grown up, at the age of twenty-five Mozart created in *Idomeneo* a heroic opera that effaces the conventional model precisely because it is aware of the tragic implications inherent in any human pretension to divinity. By that time, however, Mozart had realized that the old Italianate *opera seria* was not for him. Heroic opera had dealt in closed musical forms with absolute ethical values, which claim that we know how people ought to behave even if they don't do so. But in a rapidly changing, increasingly democratized society such an approach, aiming with

equivocal success at unity, was no longer pertinent. Nor was it adequate to substitute for the aristocratic-autocratic *opera seria* an *opera buffa*, *opéra comique*, or *Singspiel* dealing, in vernacular Italian, French, or German, with the low life of common men and women. As a child, Mozart had explored these increasingly popular genres; grown up, he knew that the only musical-theatrical convention appropriate to the new, volatile world must be at once aristocratic and democratic, tragic and comic. If *opera seria* by its nature sought for unity, mature Mozartian opera was dualistic in its essence.

The very stories of Mozart's mature operas concern tensions between worlds old and new, and there are no unambiguous good and bad guys. *The Marriage of Figaro* is about the fight between a moribund aristocracy and the democratic world of common people. Figaro and Susanna, the young representatives of the new society, are lively and lovely but humanly fallible; the autocratic Count is a pathological case rather than a monster, and his aristocratic Countess, far from being a villainess, is a tragic victim. We can identify with all the protagonists, since the opera's moral standards are, like Mozart's society, in process of formulation. Similarly, there is a three-way relationship among the aristocratic but decadent Don Giovanni, the women (whether aristocrats, middle-class upwardly mobile types, or peasant-servants) who are his prey, and Leporello, the underdog who is also Giovanni's alter ego, insofar as he, rather than the Don, is the future. At the end the ambiguous hero is yanked down to hell, his crime having been his literal destruction of the old world, when he slaughtered the Commendatore in the opera's first scene. The descent to hell is so intensely dramatic that it is rightly regarded as a harbinger of Romanticism; but it is also comic, and is followed by a full-scale *buffo* finale affirming society's return to its primrose path, now that the threat presented by uncontrolled libido seems, momentarily, to have passed. Civilization must be preserved, and cannot be unless at least lip service is paid to the status quo. Nonetheless, some form of change seems to be both necessary and inevitable.

All this is inherent in the techniques of Mozart's music. He was the only

composer of his age whose distinction came equally from operas and from instrumental works in sonata form—the new, dualistic compositional principle apposite to conflict, growth, and change. His mature operas fuse the “closed” forms of *opera seria*, such as the *aria da capo*, with the “open,” evolutionary sonata. People grow while they sing Mozart's arias, and may not be the same at an aria's end as they were at the beginning. They are still more transformed as they interact with one another, democratically expressing different responses to the same situation, in the ensemble numbers that are the climax to each act. Social transformation implies a metamorphosis of individual identities, and vice versa. The vital music of the sonata era deals with the relationship between public and private life, in which respect Mozart is the most profound, as well as the liveliest, humanist in music.

BUT THERE IS another dimension to art which Mozart—unlike Bach and, in his different way, Beethoven—did not for most of his life explore. This is the dimension usually called religious, concerned not so much with relationships between people as with the relationship between man and God. Although Mozart was as a very young man employed by the Catholic Church, and had naturally produced ecclesiastical music, this was—and was meant to be and was accepted as—rococo social music, secular in spirit, and in technique operatic in the old sense. But during the 1780s, the great years of his operatic creation, Mozart became fascinated by what one can only call religious experience, though it had little to do with his traditional Church and much to do with the fashionable religion of enlightenment, as promoted by Freemasonry.

Fundamentally, eighteenth-century Masons were opposed to what they considered the “superstition” of revealed religion, and were in turn distrusted by the Catholic Church. The original English Lodge claimed in 1723 that “we . . . are resolved against all Politicks,” and defined its aim as the conciliation of “true friendship among persons who must otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance.” In France the Masonic program paralleled the universal liberalism of the Encyclopaedists; in Germany it moralistically



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**BIG IDEAS AND
DEAD-END THRILLS**
by Thomas M. Disch

Science fiction has never been more popular than in the past fifteen years, the author writes: in Hollywood, *Star Wars* and its offspring have raised the genre to the level of "big-bucks extravaganzas," while book publishers have "pioneered the SF equivalent of franchise merchandising." Meanwhile, says the author, the field and its writers dwindle ever further into adolescent silliness.



**A JONQUIL
FOR MARY PENN**
by Wendell Berry

"She had learned to think of herself as living and working at the center of a wonderful provisioning: the kitchen and garden, hogpen and smokehouse, hen house and cellar, of her own household; the little commerce of giving and taking that spoked out along the paths connecting her household to the others; Port William on its ridgetop in one direction, Goforth in its valley in the other; and all this at the heart of the weather and the world." A short story.

became "an exercise of Brotherly Love [whereby] we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family, the high and the low, the rich and the poor." Clearly, there were two interlaced strands to such concerns, one psychological and even mystical, the other political. Gradually the Masons bifurcated: one camp, the Rosicrucians, stressed the psychological aspects of the creed, while the other, the self-styled Illuminati, became politically subversive—at least in the frightened eyes of the ecclesiastical establishment. By the end of the century a hysterical establishment could even maintain that the Illuminati were directly responsible for the French Revolution. The charge was paranoid: even Franz Heinrich Ziegenhagen, who in 1792 boldly advocated a classless society, believed that it could be peacefully attained through education. In any case, not even the enlightened took any notice of him; the rich did not surrender their loot, let alone their inherited wealth, to the common weal. The starry-eyed Ziegenhagen committed suicide in 1806.

Gluck and Haydn were both Masons, and it is obvious that the Mozart who, quoting the Latin tag, "deemed nothing human alien" to him would have relished the political aspects of Masonry. It is also unsurprising that Masonic creeds appealed to him at the deeper, Rosicrucian levels, as they did, still more, to the Beethoven of the *Missa Solemnis*. Shifts of emphasis in Mozart's music, after he formally became a Mason in 1784, are unmistakable, if discreet; it cannot have been fortuitous that in these years he made an exhaustive study of the counterpoint of Bach, the greatest of all religious composers. Fugue, especially as practiced by Bach, is the fundamental principle of unity in European music, as opposed to the duality of sonata, the compositional principle that was the essence of Mozart's work. The somewhat frenzied intensity of Mozart's conscious exercises in Bachian fugue—such as the C-minor Adagio and Fugue for string quartet or two pianos—suggests that the idiom didn't come to him naturally. What matters, however, is the effect his studies had on the general tenor of his creation. In particular, the final trinity of symphonies, written over a remarkably short time span, embraces polyphony and

counterpoint at once more complex and more lucid than was common in Mozart's earlier works. Together the three symphonies amount to a magnificent Masonic credo. No. 39 is in the Masonic-ritual key of E-flat major, symbolizing the three knocks on the door to enlightenment; no. 40 is in Mozart's "tragic" G minor, delineating a purgatorial progress; no. 41, in "white" C major, represents the triumph of light, climaxing in a synthesis of opposites—of homophony with polyphony, of the dualistic principle of sonata with the monistic principle of fugue. The string quintets, perhaps the greatest of Mozart's chamber works, likewise reinterpret the social aspects of Masonry in psychological terms; the G minor, in particular, is an initiation, *agon*, and rebirth such as Masonic ritual re-enacted, in emulation of the Eleusinian mysteries. Significantly, the tragic pain of this quintet dissolves in a major apotheosis that reminds us of Papageno.

And of course it is Mozart's *Singspiel*, *The Magic Flute*, that in directly invoking the Orpheus story reveals how Masonic initiates hoped to reintroduce transcendence into humanitarian ethics. Written in Mozart's last year, for a vaudeville theater run by Emanuel Schikaneder (himself a Mason), it embraces a diversity of manners from grand opera to street song and an eighteenth-century equivalent of the TV jingle. It seems confused, as do we, because it deals with a world in transition, as is ours. We have noted that Mozart himself was profoundly ambivalent: a Roman Catholic who dispatched his lecherous Giovanni, tragicomic symbol of modern libido, to hell; but also a Mason dedicated to enlightenment through reason, social benevolence, and a liberal education. He could not—his Shakespearean stature depends on this—passively accord with an either-or view of the human condition. Both rational thought and irrational belief had their own truths. Like Blake, his near-contemporary, Mozart knew that "without Contraries [there] is no Progression."

SO MOZART'S Masonic opera proves to be not so much about the conflict between darkness and light as about the new man and woman who are born of it. When the Masonic vow of silence forbids Tamino, the hero on

trial, to speak to his beloved Pamina, her anguish parallels that of Eurydice when Orpheus is forbidden to look back. But Pamina does not just "fade away" of her sorrow, as does Gluck's Eurydice; she sings what is perhaps the most sublime aria even Mozart ever wrote—in G minor, of course, in a slow *siciliano* rhythm, as though the pulse is dying of inanition. The arching melody drops balm; the Neapolitan progressions and German sixths of the harmony at once hurt and heal. Spiritually, if not in the superficialities of technique, the air, mating operatic aria, folk song, and hymn, is the most Bach-like music Mozart ever wrote—certainly far more so than the self-conscious imitation of a Bach fugue he experimented with in that C-minor Adagio and Fugue.

Pamina, saving herself from despairing suicide by her song, becomes the agent of redemption in presumptively eternal love between a man and a woman. In this sense she, not Tamino, is the central character, and the redemption she achieves is comically echoed in the subplot of Papageno and Papagena. He, a bird-man halfway between nature and us, is also saved from suicide (probably in his case a mock suicide), by the appearance of three magic boys, who advise him to resort to his musical bells—a demotic substitute for Orpheus' lyre. As he tinkles them, his bird-girl Papagena is restored to him "alive and well"; and although these bird-innocents cannot graduate to light along with Tamino and Pamina (the new world's new man and woman), their smaller rebirth offers to the commonest common folk, including you and me, the possibility of at least a mini-redemption. It is Pamina, the catalyst between masculine intellect and feminine intuition, who makes this possible. In being herself restored to life, she, like Persephone, restores the world. Day and night, man and woman, reason and love, are mutually incarnate.

The orthodox morality of the Enlightenment adhered, of course, to the well-illuminated notion of God as Master Mechanic and First Architect and Mason. Even though the mystery latent in Masonic pilgrimage appealed to the Enlightenment cult of Hellenism and the Exotick, rational man could only blench at the irrationality (and still more the feminism!) thus re-



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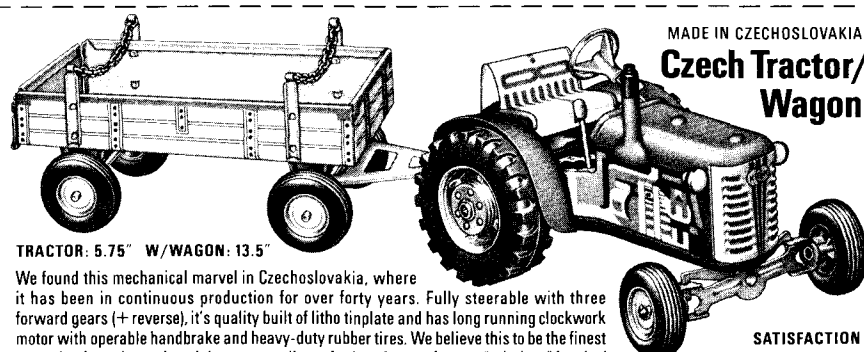
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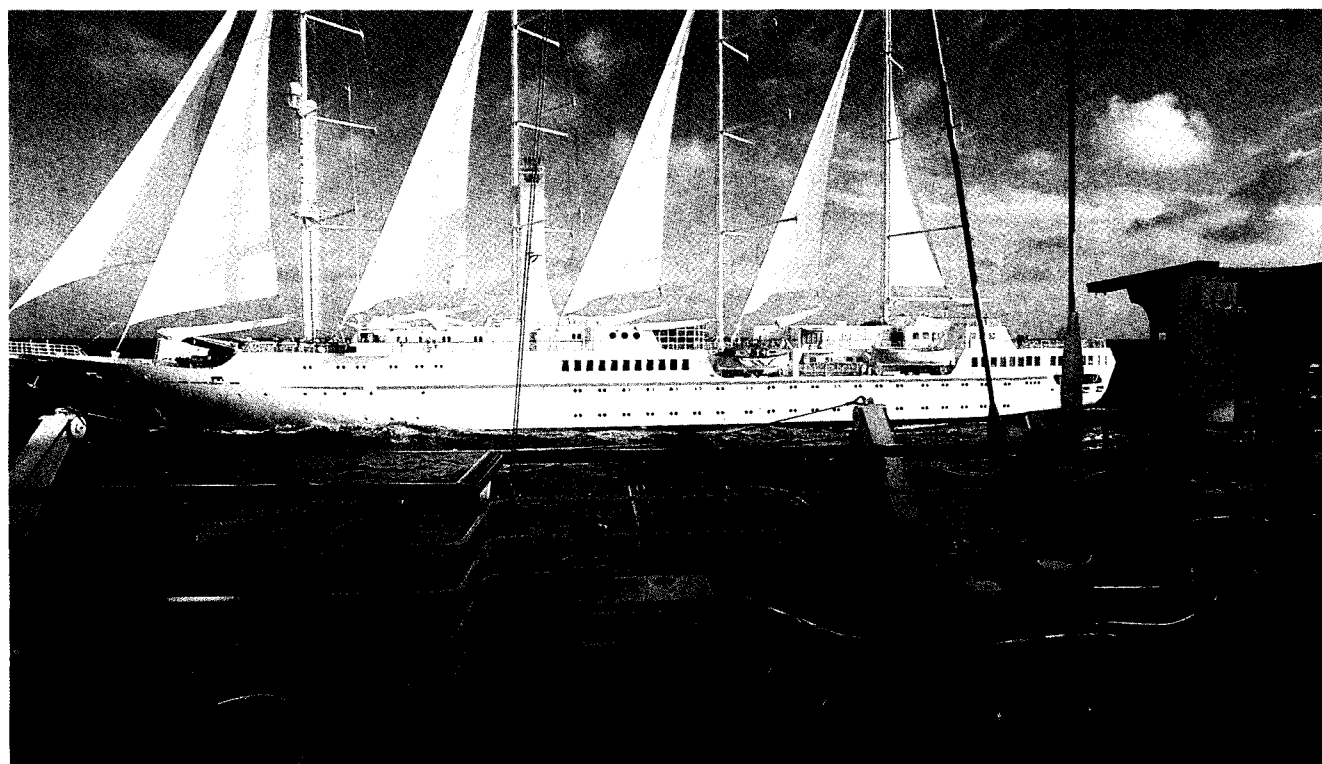
vealed. Nonetheless, the truly great artists of the time were great precisely because they *didn't* blench. Mozart's last works, despite their light-shedding sociability, are profoundly death-haunted. One thinks not only of the irrational pluralism of *The Magic Flute*, with its descent into the dark labyrinth that the legendary Orpheus confronted, but also of the Concerto for Clarinet, a relatively new instrument much favored by Masons for its mysterious tone color—especially the concerto's slow movement, wherein the soloist chants a sublime melody that, like Pamina's G-minor aria, is a hybrid of an operatic aria, an innocent folk song, and a wise Sarastro-like Masonic hymn. This is music of man-woman re-born, to make, it is hoped, a newly democratic world. There are hints of this hopefulness even in the explicitly death-dedicated *Requiem* that Mozart embarked on in response to a commission from a mysterious dark-livered stranger. Although the man was in fact the harmless emissary of a count who wanted to pass off the piece as his own memorial tribute to a deceased wife, the incident seemed sinister to the ailing, overworked Mozart, who feared that the requiem might be for himself. Such it proved, in the sense that Mozart died before he could finish it; and there is an added irony in the fact that he had inadequate time for the task because of pressure to complete an old-fashioned *opera seria*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, designed to celebrate the coronation of Leopold II as King of Bohemia. A paradox remains, even though Leopold was a benevolent despot with Masonic inclinations.

MOZART SURVIVED for only half of his biblically allotted threescore years and ten, and living with such brief intensity, he seemed to have been more than normally death-conscious. On this subject he wrote a remarkable letter to his father.

I need not tell you with what anxiety I await better news from you. Since death (take my words literally) is the true goal of our lives, I have made myself so well acquainted with this true and best friend of man that the idea of it no longer has terrors for me, but rather much that is tranquil and comforting. And I thank God that he has granted me the good for-

tune to obtain the opportunity of regarding death as the key to our true happiness. I never lie down in bed without considering that, young as I am, perhaps on the morrow I may be no more. Yet not one of those who know me could say that I am morose or melancholy, and for this I thank my Creator daily and wish heartily that the same happiness may be given to my fellow men.

Although Mozart remained formally a Catholic as well as a Mason, we cannot know whether he preserved a traditionally Catholic view of life after death. But we can say that such a belief is not necessarily latent in that extraordinary letter, nor in the consummate perfection of the music he wrote in his last year. This music leaves nothing to be said. Had Mozart lived longer, he would presumably have added something to a musical experience that seems already all-inclusive, but it is impossible to imagine what. In this he differs from Schubert, who died even younger, leaving us with a tragic sense of potentialities on the brink of fulfillment. We can speculate on the implications of the fact that Schubert could, indeed should, have survived well after the first performance of *Tristan*, but we cannot think of Mozart in those chronological terms. Even the slightest work of his final year seems to exist independent of time and place. In the little piece for glass harmonica, K617; in the cantata composed for Masonic rites, K619; and above all in the last of the string quintets, K614 (in the Masonic key of E-flat major), we find a new idiom: luminously diaphanous, not so much seeking the light as letting light *through*; seemingly of childlike simplicity, yet fraught with *lacrimae rerum*. Such divertimenti diverted Mozart, no doubt, and they would divert a company of angels; but they are poles apart from the serenades and cassations of his boyhood, and are no longer music to eat or to chatter to. It almost seems as though Mozart had relinquished the task of writing music for a society that of its nature is as ephemeral as a dream. He now wrote in a celestial drawing room, where the only audience was himself and silence (and he, having fathered the music, did not need to listen): just as Bach in his last years, composing *The Art of Fugue* in an outmoded fashion, played to himself in an empty church. □



© JULIAN FISHER

On the Wind Star, as it sails alongside its sister ship the Wind Spirit en route to a half day's rendezvous in the Bahamas

For the Cruise-Suspicious

Sail and windjammer cruises fill the gap between forced jollity and sailing the boat yourself

by Barbara Wallraff

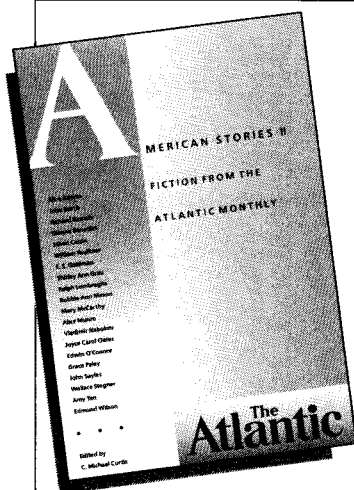
THERE ARE plenty of cruises for people who want to have a rousing good time on vacation. And there are plenty of cruises for people who want to tour remote parts of the world—Antarctica, Borneo, or the Galápagos, say—in comfort and ease, in an ecologically sensitive way, or both. There are cruises for people who love elaborate food (probably the most spectacular example has been charterings of Norwegian Cruise Line's *Norway*, née *France*, by French gourmets, which present signature dishes of numerous highly regarded chefs, and also lectures, cooking demonstrations, and tastings). There are jazz cruises, steamboat cruises, bridge cruises, barge cruises, an antismoking benefit cruise (on Dolphin Cruise Line's *Dol-*

phin), and even cruises for people who love basketball, skiing, or tennis (NBA players and pro skiers and tennis players are invited on board during particular sailings of Norwegian Cruise Line ships). But are there cruises for people who mistrust the very idea of cruises? Yes. The luxurious ones are called sail cruises, the bargain-priced ones are called windjammer cruises, and both types can be wonderful.

I am not mistrustful of cruises, I must admit. It is because I am a cruise enthusiast—"booster" might not be too strong a word—that I've learned how many serious-minded people scorn cruising, and how many other people are incredulous that someone they perceive as serious-minded would enjoy it. I suppose they're thinking of

the *Love Boat* stereotype. By taking the stereotype for the reality, though, they're missing out. The stereotype has become less and less true, as the cruise industry has grown, segmented, and created within itself as many niches as there are in a coral reef.

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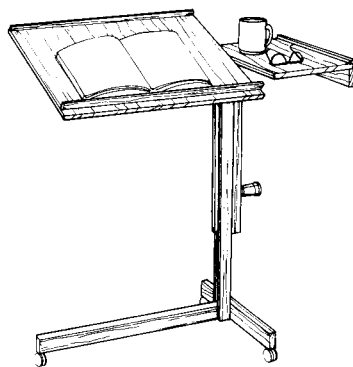
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the 148-passenger *Wind Star* is not only an exceptionally beautiful ship but also one poised at the intersection of wind-jammer, charter yacht, and cruise ship. Thus was born the sail cruise, and the cruise industry didn't take long to recognize this as an idea whose time had come. Club Med, which was seeking to enter the cruise market, chose to do so with similar 386-passenger sail-cruise ships, the second of which is scheduled to enter service in the South Pacific late this year; and a new company called Star Clippers introduced two 180-passenger sail-cruise vessels, the second of which is scheduled to enter service in the Mediterranean this May. Is imitation or acquisition the sincerest form of flattery these days? Windstar itself was snapped up by the well-established Holland America Line, which in turn was bought by big, aggressive Carnival Cruise Lines. Windstar remains the sail-cruise line to beat: its ships are the most elegant and spacious, its food the best.

Elegant, spacious, best . . . the specter of pretension often lurks in the neighborhood of words like those. But Windstar is not stuffy at all. There's something about having sails overhead that's wholesome and restful, and sets a tone. Windstar complements that tone perfectly, with historical sailing-related engravings and prints lining the corridors; with cabin boys who race down the corridors getting their work done until you step in front of them, whereupon they amble respectfully behind you until you're out of the way and they can begin racing again; with a captain, on the *Wind Star*, who once completed the Whitbread Round the World Race and who, at welcome-aboard cocktail parties, addresses the passengers: "Ladies and gentlemen, this is a sailing vessel, and I hope to have the chance to prove it to you this week" (indeed, Windstar ships have been known to travel under sail power alone for some 70 percent of a voyage); with food that is diverse, light, creative, healthful, contemporary, and good. Ultra-deluxe cruise lines typically give their passengers all the caviar they want—but how many people can spoon up bowlsful without feeling queasy afterward? Smoked salmon, though, is a treat most people can eat a lot of, and it is one of the foods available round the clock on Windstar.

The Windstar cruise I took last sum-

mer was my second. Having shipped out on the *Wind Song* in French Polynesia in Windstar's second year, I worried that I would be disappointed by the itinerary, which took us to various out islands of the Bahamas—an itinerary that Windstar had hurriedly substituted, during the Gulf War, for a Mediterranean one (and is unlikely to repeat). I *didn't* like this as much as I'd liked French Polynesia, but I also came to the conclusion that the ships themselves make for such a great vacation that the itinerary doesn't necessarily matter very much.

Also, I worried that I would make unhappy discoveries at every turn about changes that had occurred since Windstar had become part of a huge, mass-market corporation. Such differences as I noticed, though, were relatively minor and detracted from the overall experience not at all. The biggest single change is one from a European to an Indonesian and Philippine staff (the officers continue to be mostly Scandinavian). And there were little changes that seemed intended to please and reassure passengers who are accustomed to normal cruise-ship routines. For example, one morning when we were under sail—a time when the old Windstar would have left us to our own devices—interested passengers were invited to the lounge to learn fancy ways of folding table napkins; strange and wonderful lessons are a cruise-ship staple. I was reading in the lounge (and was, by the way, untroubled by motion sickness, since the boat has remarkably effective high-tech stabilizing equipment) when older women arrived for the lessons, by ones and twos, and settled in. They brought with them an air of comfortable, familiar anticipation—and suddenly I realized that people who *aren't* mistrustful of cruises are likely to love Windstar too.

“THIS ISN'T a cruise. This is a week on a sailing-history museum,” Bill Alexander, the owner of the *Timberwind*, a windjammer, said to me one sunny summer

morning as we gusted along off the coast of Maine. The *Timberwind* is in fact not a self-consciously old-timey boat. Rather, it is a handsome two-masted schooner (any configuration of sailing ship can be a “windjammer”; the term doesn't mean anything very precise) that was built in 1931 and served as Portland Harbor's pilot boat for thirty-eight years, until Bill, a high school math teacher, and his wife, Julie, a nurse, bought it. They have of-

slight woman with long white hair and bright eyes, Kok runs a little shop, much of whose merchandise (bookmarks, note cards, and the like) she will inscribe to order with calligraphy or Egyptian hieroglyphics. She said, “I hate to tell you, but we make fun of people who come here and head straight for a shower. Why are you on the boat? Not for that. You have a shower back home.”

What I don't have back home, but wish I did, is something to rock me to sleep like the *Timberwind*, with its gentle motion. (People who suffer from seasickness but who would like to cruise should ask their physicians to prescribe scopolamine patches, which are worn behind the ear and which have proved very effective.)

Night after night we

slept like innocents. Day after day we ate like lumberjacks—wholesome, hearty, unpretentious food like blueberry pancakes, chili, brownies, and roast turkey with stuffing.

All day you sit on the deck in the sun (or in your cabin or in the dining area if it happens to be raining), reading or remarking on the coastal scenery, or other boats, or the birdlife, or your fellow passengers. In late afternoon you anchor, generally near a picturesque town or village, and members of the crew take you by fours and sixes ashore in the yawl boat to have a stroll, have a beer, look around. There's no printed itinerary: the captain sails according to the wind and his inclination.

One night we fetched up at Isleboro, deep in Penobscot Bay. A group of us were ferried ashore after dinner, and we sauntered up the lawn to the terrace of the lovely, peaceful Isleboro Inn to have a drink. The sun was setting; the bay view was like a Tiffany window. The air was still and a bit heavy, enhancing the effect. I went into the inn's bathroom to wash my face and hands before the drinks arrived and discovered a gleaming claw-footed tub. I was tempted for only a moment, and then I hurried back outside to watch the sunset. That was, after all, why I was here.



Cruising and brunching on the *Heritage*, a Maine Windjammer Association schooner

fered cruises out of Rockport, Maine, lasting three days to a week, aboard it every summer since. This coming summer they will be leasing the *Timberwind* to Captain Rick Miles.

A luxury cruise this isn't: You and the fifteen or twenty other passengers are all invited to help hoist the sails every morning after breakfast, furl the sails late every afternoon, and prepare or clean up after a meal or two during the week. The bunks are narrow, the cabin doors are curtains, and such bathing as was done aboard ship was, at the time I was aboard, accomplished with water heated on the galley wood stove and available from a keg on deck every morning. (Showers have since been installed.) In the evenings, when the ship was at anchor, we were free to bathe in the sea (Joy detergent works pretty well in salt water as a shampoo), and then someone would pour a bucket of fresh water over us when we climbed back on board, bluish and shivering but invigorated.

After four or five days of this I made sure I was first in line to be tendered ashore at Stonington, where Julie had told us a bed-and-breakfast offered showers to windjammer passengers. Later, poking around in town, I was made to feel foolish by a charming down-Maine eccentric, Evelyn Kok. A

Answers to the December Puzzler

P	A	C	T	S	R	T	O	M	T	I	T
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TRYING TO get the best possible deal on a sail cruise is almost as much of a challenge as trying to get the best possible deal on a flight. Unfortunately, it's not always enough simply to call up the cruise line or your local travel agency and ask for their best price.

When I recently called asking about high-season week-long sailings this April out of Barbados, Windstar was quoting a fare of \$2,595 per person, double occupancy, plus airfare (this rate applies to all except one of the ship's cabins, which are roughly the same); discount cruise agencies were quoting fares of \$2,039 to \$2,205, sometimes with proportional discounts on airfare. Some of these agencies got certain details wrong about what Windstar has to offer (for example, one said that it offered only a fourteen-day cruise in mid-April, whereas it really offers two seven-day itineraries that may be combined). Thus a smart shopper would call Windstar (206-281-3535) at least to ask for its brochure, and then, brochure in hand, call around to discounters. The big, nationally known ones include Baton Rouge Vacations at Sea (800-999-2493), Cruise Directors (800-348-0009), Cruises of Distinction (800-634-3445), The Cruise Line (800-327-3021), Landry & Kling (800-431-4007), and South Florida Cruises (800-327-7447). Other good deals may be advertised in local newspapers. Windstar was offering two-for-one specials last summer, to compensate for having changed their itinerary, and bargains may also be available in the future, because the cruise industry is generally suffering from overcapacity.

Agencies also book most windjammer cruises, but no one offers substantial discounts on them. A week on the *Timberwind* (800-759-9250) costs \$525 to \$600 per person; the ship sails May through October. You might also call the Maine Windjammer Association (800-624-6380) for information about various windjammer cruises in Maine, and Windjammer Barefoot Cruises (800-327-2601) for information about ones in the Caribbean. By now all of these windjammers offer opportunities to take showers on board. And all of them have sails. Which of these features more greatly enhances the quality of an oceangoing vacation I leave to you. □

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Books

Should Suburbs Be Designed?

by Witold Rybczynski

MAKING A MIDDLE LANDSCAPE
by Peter G. Rowe.
The MIT Press, \$39.95.

I RECENTLY conducted a graduate seminar on the subject of housing. If things got dull, as they sometimes did, I knew that I could always animate the discussion by introducing the subject of suburbia—or, rather, by insinuating that suburban housing had some merit. I might just as well have been defending male chauvinism or global warming. On this one subject, at least, my architecture students were unanimous: the suburbs, like fast food, big business, and Styrofoam cups, were bad, beneath contempt, certainly beneath study. One would never have guessed from their spirited condemnations that most of these young men and women had grown up in suburban surroundings and would probably return there to raise their families.

My students' reaction is hardly surprising. Ever since the 1950s, when David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* and William H. Whyte, Jr.'s *The Organization Man* appeared, the

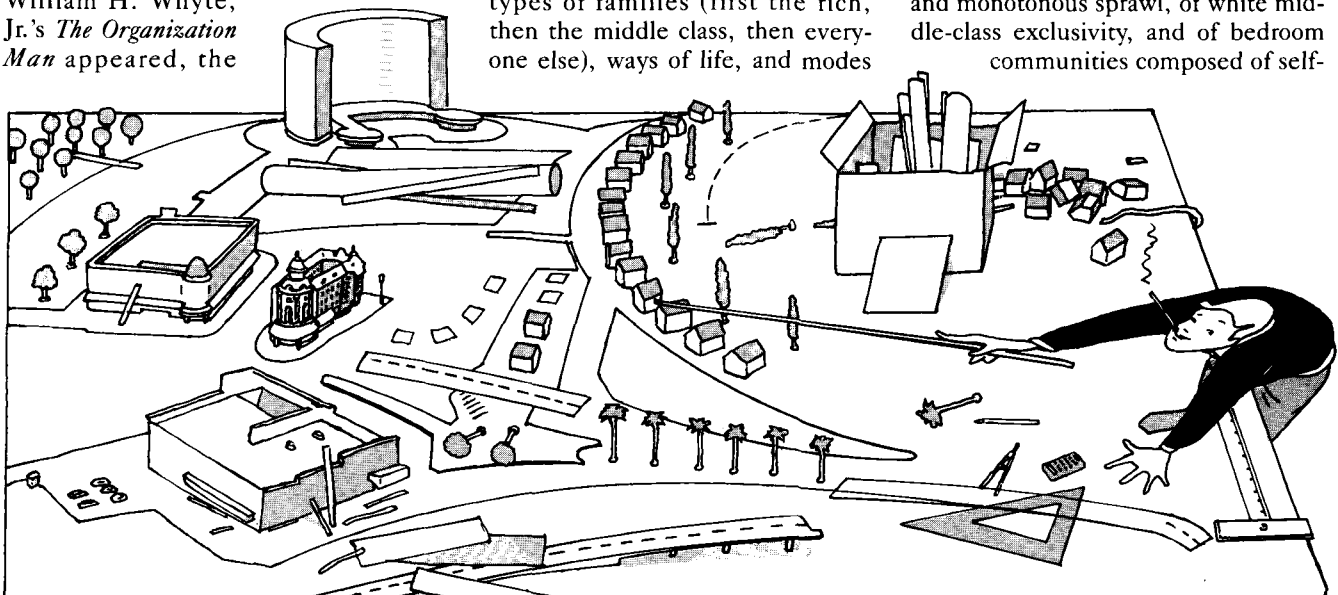
suburbs have been associated with middle-class alienation and white-collar conformity. Resolutely middle-brow, suburbs incorporated none of the traditional virtues of the city; moreover, the rise of the postwar suburbs coincided with the decline of the city center. Even Lewis Mumford, an earlier advocate of garden cities, came to see the growth of suburbs as an ominous sign of the disintegration of the traditional city, and a symptom of the deterioration of civilized life. (Mumford spent the last fifty years of his life living outside New York.)

These critics were reacting to the postwar suburbs exemplified by Levittown, but the idea of living outside the city was much older than that. The first modern suburbs were built on the outskirts of London in the late eighteenth century, and they reversed the tradition according to which the middle class lived in the center of the city and the poor on the edges. Although Continental cities resisted suburbanization (Vienna and Paris were ringed by dense working-class neighborhoods), in America the British model prevailed; the first "villa park," Llewellyn Park, was built on the outskirts of New York in 1857. The long history of the American suburb demonstrates the resiliency of this urban form, which underwent many changes as it accommodated various types of families (first the rich, then the middle class, then everyone else), ways of life, and modes

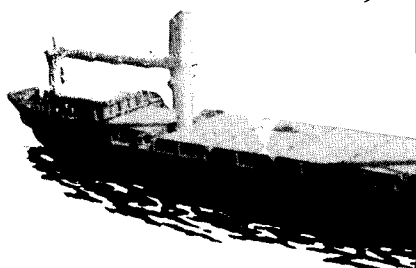
of transportation: the railroad, the streetcar, and finally the automobile.

In 1970, for the first time, there were more suburbanites in the United States than people living in cities or rural areas. The 1990 census shows that 46.2 percent of the U.S. population now lives in metropolitan areas outside central cities—that is, in the suburbs. Almost all city growth now takes place in the suburbs, not in central cities. (From 1950 to 1960 the population of central cities in large metropolitan areas grew by a national average of only 1.5 percent; the suburbs increased by 53.9 percent.) The so-called back-to-the-city movement of the 1970s fizzled out; high rents, high prices, and high crime have continued to drive young families to the suburbs. Clearly, suburbs—in one form or another—are here to stay.

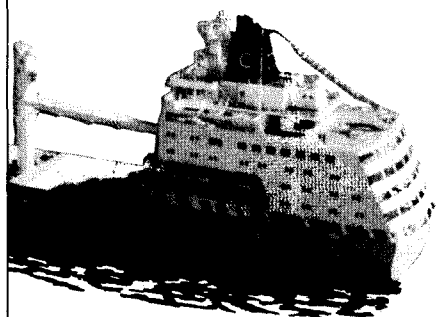
According to Kenneth T. Jackson, a history professor at Columbia University and the author of *Crabgrass Frontier*, one of the best recent histories of the American suburb, "Suburbia has become the quintessential physical achievement of the United States. . . ." Why, then, the antipathy of my students, or indeed of most intellectuals, to the suburb? One reason, I think, is that suburbs have become a stereotype. To most people, suburbs still conjure up images of uniformity and monotonous sprawl, of white middle-class exclusivity, and of bedroom communities composed of self-



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satisfied lawn-rakers and smug backyard barbecuers.

The reality is much more complicated. There are hundred-year-old suburbs that are now considered a part of the city and far-flung raw tracts where the lawns have barely had time to grow in. And suburbs are no longer as economically and racially homogeneous as they once were. There are rich suburbs and poor suburbs, and although it is true that inner cities are frequently minority ghettos, the suburbs are beginning to show considerable diversity (during the 1970s, for example, the suburban black population increased by nearly 40 percent). Critics point out that individual suburban enclaves often exhibit ethnic homogeneity (Chicano, black, Italian, Jewish), but surely that is only a mirror of traditional city neighborhoods. The conventional view of suburbs as consisting exclusively of single-family houses is no longer true; suburbs are just as likely to contain high-rise apartments, condominiums, and attached town houses.

Nor is it any longer correct to describe suburbs as chiefly residential. As Joel Garreau points out in his recent book, *Edge City*, the nature of suburban growth is different from what it was in the past. There is now far more office space on the outskirts of New York than in Manhattan; across the country corporations are relocating their offices outside the city, to peripheral areas like Houston's Galleria, San Francisco's Silicon Valley, and Boston's Burlington Mall. These new suburban areas (or "urban villages," as the October, 1986, cover story in *The Atlantic* called them) are no longer dependent on the metropolis for employment, shopping, or entertainment. They have become self-sufficient cities in their own right. Indeed, they have even spawned their own suburbs—"sub-suburbs," half-rural communities surrounded by countryside.

Sprawling rather than dense, based on the car rather than the pedestrian, and characterized by diversity rather than homogeneity, American suburbs challenge conventional notions of urbanity. This is not the way cities are supposed to look. The disparity did not seem to bother the planners of the first suburbs, people like Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, or the generation that followed—Grosvenor Atterbury, Bertram Goodhue, John

Nolen. Nor did it disturb Frank Lloyd Wright, who celebrated the suburban ideal in his Broadacre City proposal, which was exhibited in Rockefeller Center in 1935. But postwar planners and architects, influenced by the largely European ideology of modern architecture, preferred to turn a blind eye to what was happening in the suburbs and focus their attention on urban renewal and downtown rehabilitation. It is only in the past two decades that some postmodern designers, such as Robert Venturi and Robert A. M. Stern, and town planners, such as Denise Scott Brown and Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, have begun to take the suburban environment seriously. Stern, in particular, has mounted a spirited defense of the suburban enclave.

THE PHYSICAL character of American suburban development is the subject of *Making a Middle Landscape*, by Peter Rowe, a professor of architecture and urban design at Harvard. In an attempt to break down the suburban stereotype, Rowe has coined the term "middle landscape" (between city and country), and he devotes a good deal of his book to an interesting examination of the evolution of the four chief cultural artifacts that have shaped it: houses, shopping places, workplaces, and highways.

The suburban house has gone through several transformations, from the picturesque cottages that Alexander Jackson Davis designed for Llewellyn Park to the postwar Cape Cod houses that William Levitt built in Long Island potato fields. The turn-of-the-century Chicago bungalow, which became the predominant type in California in the 1920s, was supplanted by the western-inspired ranch house, which is still being built across the United States and Canada. The Colonial-revival house became another popular model. After about 1975, according to Rowe, the Colonial and the ranch were merged in a house that combined the compact, two-story appearance of the Colonial with the less formal, open-room arrangement of the ranch.

The shopping center is a suburban fixture that is usually taken for granted, but it, too, underwent many changes before assuming its present form. The earliest suburbs were explicitly promoted as purely residential,

and contained no shops whatsoever—express companies delivered goods (usually by rail) from the city. Eventually, commercial strips grew up along the major streets, following the lines of electric streetcars. The first so-called shopping village, consisting of a grouping of stores interspersed with parking lots, was built outside Kansas City in 1908. The developers of Shaker Heights, a famous planned community in Cleveland, built a shopping center in 1929 that included shops, a bank, and a theater. During the 1950s shopping centers began to be replaced by shopping malls that were increasingly self-contained, often enclosed, and completely oriented to the automobile. Or, rather, they were designed to be reached by automobile, for the shopping mall is really oriented to the pedestrian. The latest malls are best described as bazaars. They contain not only shops but also hotels, offices, and community, entertainment, and leisure facilities. Increasingly, their architectural form, too, is richer, often evocative of traditional town markets.

The first American suburbs were inspired by British examples. But American builders were soon developing their own ideas, and what emerges strikingly from Rowe's historical review is the degree of architectural innovation that went into making the suburban landscape. This involved not only inventing new house types and new forms of commercial centers but also refining (if that is the word) the iconography of roadside buildings—everything from gas stations to restaurants and, although Rowe does not include them, movie theaters and even churches. More elegant were the office campuses and corporate estates, often in parklike settings. Tying it all together were a system of parkways (the first begun in 1906) and expressways and an elaborate network of boulevards, streets, looped roads, and cul-de-sacs.

The author of *Making a Middle Landscape* admirably describes the evolution of these suburban building types, but one senses, here and there, a dissatisfaction with the appearance of the suburban environment, which, whatever

its originality, has always exhibited more architectural déjà vu than avant-garde. As the final section of the book makes clear, Rowe's ambitious proposal is to refashion the American suburb to make it more, well, aesthetic. The results, mainly illustrated by the projects of Harvard graduate students, are not convincing. Rowe criticizes the suburban environment's tendency toward conservatism, nostalgia, and sentimentality, and would replace these with a warmed-over abstract modernism (itself rapidly becoming a form of nostalgia, at least among some architects). He calls for a "modern pastoralism," which appears to consist of monumental buildings juxtaposed with untouched nature. Le Corbusier meets Kmart—an odd coupling indeed.

It is unlikely that Rowe's proposal for a "poetic of the middle landscape" will have much impact on the bump-tious developments going up at Tysons Corner, outside Washington, D.C., or on the mammoth shopping mall about to open on the outskirts of Minneapolis. The sort of visual order and coher-

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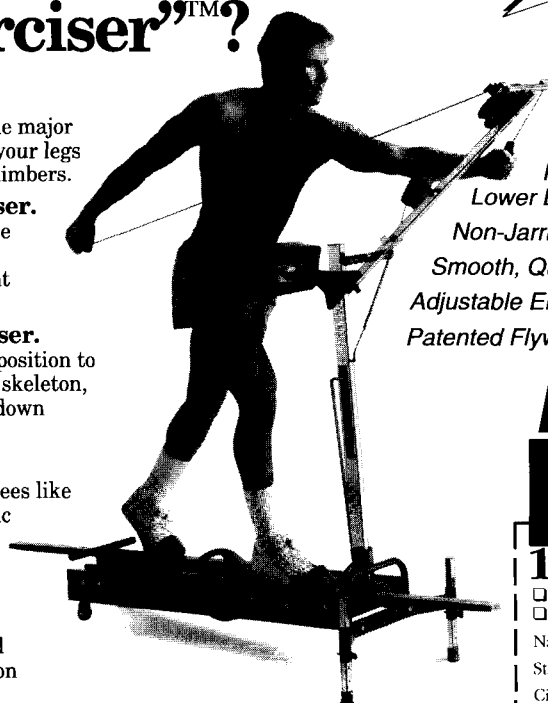
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ence that Rowe calls for are at odds with the dynamic and individualistic urges impelling suburban development today, whether in the mall or in the housing neighborhood.

The contemporary suburb appears to be driven almost wholly by market forces and not tempered, as the first villa parks were, by any intellectual ideal, except perhaps individual freedom. Some kind of considered architectural response to the way the majority of Americans want to live might be a good thing. I say "might" because the intervention of design professionals has not always had a salutary effect on the built environment—one thinks of the sterile British new towns, or of the dampening effect of architectural stylistic uniformity on many suburbs. Nor is it altogether clear which of several possible directions designers ought to take: modern architecture in the park, as Rowe suggests; a return to the tradition of the villa park; or a sort of habitable theme park. Given the catholicism of the marketplace, the likelihood is some combination of all three. □

Freud's Phalanx

by Paul Robinson

THE SECRET RING: Freud's
Inner Circle and the Politics
of Psychoanalysis
by Phyllis Grosskurth.
Addison-Wesley, \$22.95.

SIGMUND FREUD was the author of both an intellectual revolution—arguably, the most far-reaching of the twentieth century—and a professional movement. In this respect his achievement more closely resembles Karl Marx's than Charles Darwin's, even though Darwin was by far the greater influence on Freud. Like Marx, Freud aimed to change not just minds but lives. Like Marx too, he was much concerned about the fate of his legacy, all the more so as he became convinced that he was doomed to a premature death: hence his obsessive preoccupation with identifying a successor, a man who would oversee the

perpetuation of analytic ideas and also assure the unity and growth of the analytic movement.

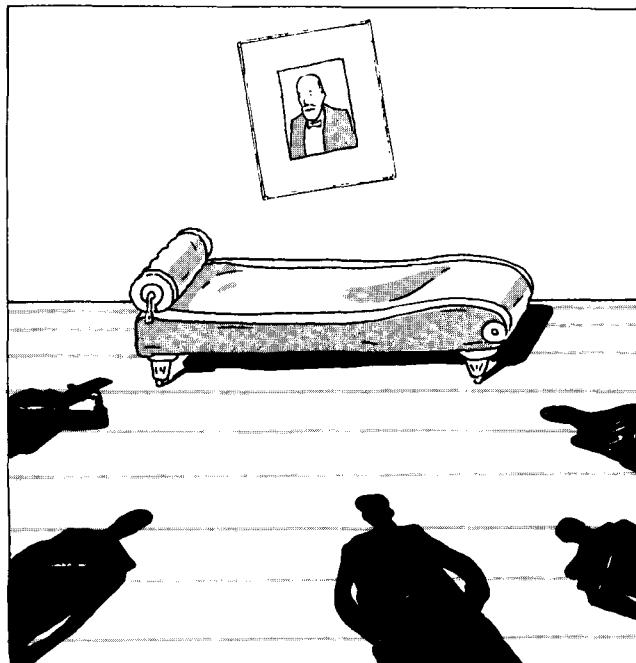
In the years before the First World War, Freud believed that he had found such an heir in Carl Jung, whom he took to calling the "crown prince" of psychoanalysis. But by his own account Freud was a poor judge of men (or *Menschenkenner*), and in no instance did his judgment fail him more utterly than in that of Jung. Freud originally chose Jung, a Swiss and a Protestant, in hopes of liberating psychoanalysis from its Viennese Jewish ghetto. But Jung's inability to accept Freud's emphasis on sex, among other things, brought the relationship to grief. At a perhaps more fundamental level, Jung's mystical tendencies were incompatible with Freud's scientific rationalism. Eventually Freud was to find the much-sought-after guardian of "the cause" in an unexpected corner: his own daughter Anna, who from the late 1920s, when her father's cancer made her his constant and intimate companion, until her death, in 1982, remained the most authoritative figure in the analytic world.

But at the time of the break with Jung, Anna was still a teenager, and Freud turned to a different solution to the problem of the succession. Instead of looking for a single heir, he adopted Ernest Jones's proposal for a secret committee of "the best and most trustworthy among our men," who would serve as a praetorian guard (or, to adopt a Carolingian metaphor, as paladins) "to take care of the further development of [psychoanalysis] and defend the cause against personalities and accidents when I am no more." The original committee was made up of five of his oldest and closest followers: Karl Abraham, in Berlin; Sandor Ferenczi, in Budapest; Ernest Jones, in London; and among the Viennese, Otto Rank and Hanns Sachs. After the war the wealthy Berliner Max Eitingon was added to the group, though he and Sachs were always less influential than the other four. Freud presented each member of the committee with an intaglio from his collection of antiquities, and the intaglios were subsequently mounted on gold rings. The rings provide Phyllis Grosskurth with the title of her new book, which is a history of the committee from its inception, in 1913, to its gradual dissolution ("with

a petulant whimper”), in the late 1920s.

Grosskurth, who is the author of fine biographies of John Addington Symonds, Havelock Ellis, and Melanie Klein, adopts something of the Freud-bashing tone of recent writings on analysis, in the tradition of Paul Roazen, Frank Sulloway, and Jeffrey Masson. She hints darkly that Freud’s paladins ruled the analytic movement like the Central Committee of the Communist Party, banishing heretics and stifling all creative diversity. Freud himself is made to resemble a kind of Stalin, a “ringmaster, exerting absolute control” over his colleagues. Alternatively, he is represented as a “withholding parent, whose ‘adopted’ children (the Committee) hungered for his attention.”

But the reality Grosskurth describes, in a gossipy and always readable narrative, is decidedly more benign. Far from being a ruthless dictator, Freud turns out to have been unusually tolerant of divergent views, and the committee, like many such bureaucratic devices, was supremely ineffectual. It began to fall apart within a year or two of its reconstitution following the war, and by the mid-twenties Freud himself was speaking of it as a thing of the past. Even in the brief span of time when it exercised a modicum of authority, most of its energy was consumed in internal squabbles, all of them petty: boundary disputes between analytic publishing houses, contests for the presidency of the International Psychoanalytic Association, and such earthshaking questions as whether Ernest Jones ought to be expelled from the committee for reportedly calling Otto Rank “a swindling Jew.” To judge from Grosskurth’s account (which in no significant way differs from the traditional picture to be found in the biographies of Freud by Ernest Jones, Ronald Clark, and Peter Gay), the committee exercised little actual influence over either theoretical developments or practical matters. It appears to have had only a single (and ironic) effect on Freud’s thinking: the quarrelsome “band of brothers” pro-



vided him with a vivid illustration of the fractiousness of group dynamics, a subject that he explored tellingly in his book *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921).

Many of Grosskurth’s pages, and often the most interesting ones, are given over to recounting Freud’s involvement in the sexual and romantic imbroglios of the committee members. Ernest Jones, whose libido was generally out of control, kept him particularly busy in this regard. In 1912 Jones brought his Dutch mistress, Loe Kann, to Freud to be analyzed, and with Freud’s blessing Loe decided to leave Jones. Within the year Freud was censuring the ever-randy Jones for resuming an affair with one of Loe’s companions. Freud later warned his daughter Anna, as she prepared to visit England, to be on guard against Jones, who hoped to marry Anna and thereby insert himself into the bosom of the royal family of psychoanalysis.

Each year seemed to bring a new source of conflict and a new alignment of parties within the committee. In the early 1920s the chief division was between Abraham and Jones, both able and efficient organizers but intellectually unadventurous, and Rank and Ferenczi, the most creative of the disciples but erratic and, in Ferenczi’s case, impractical. After Abraham died and Rank defected, the final battle for Freud’s favor was waged between Jones and Ferenczi, with the unscrupulous and sycophantic Jones helping to drive Ferenczi into depression and early death. Ernest Jones might easily count as the Himmler of psychoanalysis had he not redeemed himself by writing a magnificent biography of Freud, completed the year before he died and still the best book on Freud and the movement he created.

Phyllis Grosskurth does not give any evidence of having seriously reflected on the delicate circumstances of an intellectual innovator faced with the question of how to balance the claims of conceptual coherence on the one hand with those of openness to innovation on the other. For the most part Freud adopted the reasonable posture of jealously insisting on loyalty to certain fundamental ideas, such as the unconscious and infantile sexuality, while tolerating relatively free debate on less central matters. Rank was not read out of the movement for proposing the birth trauma, nor Jones for rejecting the death instinct, nor Ferenczi for pursuing more active forms of therapy. To pronounce Freud a tyrant because he held that certain opinions put one beyond the psychoanalytic pale is to refuse to take ideas seriously. Freud could no more countenance the rejection of the unconscious and infantile sexuality than Darwin could countenance the rejection of natural selection or Marx the rejection of the class struggle. He did not, after all, call for the silencing of heterodox voices, but he understandably insisted that figures like Jung and Adler stood for a view of human psychology fundamentally different from his own. One might legitimately complain that he sometimes interfered inappropriately in the private lives of his followers—advising them whom to marry or whom not to have an affair with—and that he was occasionally lacking in human sympathy. But his prolonged effort to guarantee the integrity of his heritage was no more than the honest debt he owed to his own remarkable intellectual achievement. To have done anything less would have been an act of historical cynicism. □

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Brief Reviews



TRAINING GROUND by Siegfried Lenz. Holt, \$24.95. Bruno, the narrator of Mr. Lenz's novel, is in his thirties, badly scarred from a childhood accident, and not quite right in the head. He is employed as a valuable assistant and quasi member of the family on the tree farm of the man who rescued him from the shipwreck that killed his parents. It appears (Bruno himself is not too clear about history) that "the chief," with wife and children, fled eastern Germany ahead of the Soviet advance, picked up Bruno on the road, and settled on an abandoned military training ground near Schleswig, eventually converting the barren mess into a superb horticultural establishment. The initially hostile Schleswigers are won over, the business prospers, the chief receives international honors, and the family slowly decays in its great new house. What could have been simply a story of rise and decline becomes something much more interesting and unusual thanks to Bruno's peculiar angle of vision. He is a baffled bystander in regard to commercial or legal transactions, but acute in observing natural phenomena and quick to recognize emotional states, although he may have small notion of what causes those. He also has a talent for upsetting formal gatherings. Altogether, he suggests a shy, generally amiable wood sprite doing his best to adapt to the human world of money and property. Property is a strong underlying motif in the novel—the value set upon it and the hostilities arising from it are what reduce the chief's achievements to cash crops and quarrels. Mr. Lenz is impressively adroit in conveying to the reader what events mean in a normal eye without deviating from Bruno's limited perspective, an accomplishment that maintains contrast and tension throughout this excellent novel.

STEEL SHIPS AND IRON MEN by Bruce Roberts and Ray Jones. Globe Pequot, \$22.95. Mr. Roberts and Mr. Jones provide what amounts to a guidebook to the Second World War Navy craft positioned around the United States as war memorials and museums open to the public. Mr. Jones's text includes details of each vessel's performance; descriptions, from classification and sister ships through engines and armaments to battle stars and nicknames; and considerable peripheral history. There are interviews with veterans and of course anecdotes—some amusing, some tragic, one, at least (a successful emergency appendectomy performed in a submerged submarine by a pharmacist's mate), amazing. One learns that the Navy, although frequently battered, ate well. Mr. Roberts's color photographs of the ships in their present locations (one sits in the midst of a large field of grass) are excellent and are supplemented by action photographs from the national and naval archives. The book is an admirably intelligent tribute to the anniversary of Pearl Harbor.

THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA by Thomas Pakenham. Random House, \$32.00. Dr. Livingstone, the idealistic missionary rescued by Stanley, proposed the beneficial opening of Africa to commerce, Christianity, and civilization—and the greatest of these was commerce. According to Mr. Pakenham, the flag followed trade, for the European scramble over pieces of African territory was precipitated by entrepreneurs who, once entrenched in trading posts, howled to their home governments for protection against either exasperated Africans or traders from other European countries. The home governments provided such protection erratically, depending on the state of the treasury, the principles of the party in power, and the date of the next election; but provide it they did in the end, carving up almost the entire continent in less than forty years. Mr. Pakenham describes this process of greed and banditry in the dense detail it deserves. He untangles the wily maneuvers by which Leopold II of Belgium got his infamous control of the Congo. He explains the country-house habit by which British officials were usually out of town when a crisis blew up. The Africans were in a hopeless position—poorly armed and usually disorganized,

although one capable warlord kept his troops in order because "troublemakers were distributed as rations." The author does not attempt to defend cannibalism or the slave trade. He simply demonstrates that European traders, soldiers, explorers, and settlers were as brutally destructive in their own way as any African tyrant had ever been. There were many interesting people involved in the conquest of Africa, and Mr. Pakenham presents them vividly and on a large scale through direct quotation and contemporary accounts. He writes with verve and irreverent wit, converting a basically disgusting story into an exciting, if still disgusting, saga.

HILLERMAN COUNTRY by Tony Hillerman, with photographs by Barney Hillerman. HarperCollins, \$39.95. Mr. Tony Hillerman's novels about the Navajo tribal police always include descriptions of the Southwest country in which they operate—descriptions that entice a reader to get up and go there. This can now be done by sedentary types through the sweeping color photographs of Mr. Barney Hillerman, which prove that the area is unique and as beautiful as one has been led to expect. Mr. Tony Hillerman's text ranges around through history (like other Indians, the Navajo were murderously persecuted by the U.S. Army), methods of fiction writing (should one invent an Anasazi ruin or just move one?), and fishing (a once favorite wilderness trout stream has become private, and posted, property). Mr. Hillerman frankly prefers landscapes uncontaminated by the presence of people, and those are the kind his brother has pictured. The collaboration is a visual and literary charmer.

THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT by Roger L. DiSilvestro, photographs by Page Chichester. John Wiley/National Audubon Society, \$34.95. The purpose of this informative, well-illustrated book is to maintain and enhance appreciation of the merits of elephants, for although the ivory trade, and therefore the slaughter of the animals, has been reduced, there is no guarantee that it will not be resumed if public indifference permits. The author begins with mammoths, goes on to consider the none-too-successful use of elephants as war machines, proceeds to the early sport-

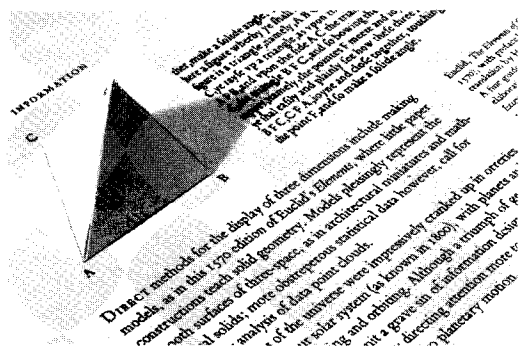
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■ In order to gain perspective, some thumbnail history may be in order. Large numbers of Jews have been living in these territories since biblical times — without interruption. Most of the Arabs living there are in fact relative newcomers. "Palestine" is the entire area now covered by Israel, including Judea/Samaria (the so-called "West Bank") and what is now the Kingdom of Jordan. It originally also included the Golan Heights, which later, in an agreement between England and France, were ceded to France, and to Syria as the successor in possession. In 1922, contrary to the requirements of the League of Nations Mandate, the British severed the entire area east of the Jordan River and gave it to the Hashemites as reward for their assistance in World War I. Thus, fully 75% of Palestine, all of which under the Mandate and under the terms of the Balfour Declaration was meant to be a homeland for the Jewish people, was lost for that purpose. Only the area west of the Jordan River was left for Jewish settlement.

■ In 1947, after decades of strife between Arabs and Jews, the British decided that they had enough and announced that they would relinquish the Mandate. The United Nations stepped in and proposed a partition plan under which the country (west of the River) was to be divided into respective Arab and Jewish areas. Jerusalem was to be an internationalized city. The Jews accepted the plan; the Arabs refused it out of hand. In 1948, on the twice truncated territory allot-

ted to them by the United Nations, the Jews declared their independence, and the state of Israel was born. On the same day, six Arab armies invaded the new-born state. In what can be described as an almost biblical miracle, the Jews defeated the six Arab armies. When an armistice was finally secured, however, TransJordan remained in possession of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem; Egypt remained in possession of the Gaza Strip. TransJordan promptly renamed itself Jordan.

■ Once in possession of the "West Bank" and East Jerusalem, the Jordanians promptly proceeded to expel all Jews and systematically to desecrate and to destroy most Jewish sacred places, cemeteries and houses of worship. No Jews, regardless of whether they were Israelis, Americans or citizens of any other country, were allowed into the "West Bank" or East Jerusalem, the locale of the Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism. In 1967, Abdel Nasser of Egypt, joined by the same array of Arab armies that had tried to destroy Israel in 1948, launched another war against Israel "to drive the Jews into the sea" and into oblivion, once and for all. The Israelis pre-empted and utterly defeated the combined Arab might in the 6-Day War, one of the greatest military victories in history. When the dust of war settled, the Israelis had not only retained their national territory, but had repossessed (not occupied) the territories of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), the eastern part of Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the vast Sinai Peninsula.

It is clear from this abbreviated history that the Israeli claim to the "West Bank" is at least as strong as that of the Arabs. It's only by dint of constant repetition that the world has come to think of these territories as "occupied Arab land". About 100,000 Jews now live in these territories. And why shouldn't they? Why should the Arab countries and the "West Bank" be the only places in the whole wide world where Jews are not allowed to live? How can 100,000 Jews living among 700,000 Arabs be the "greatest threat to peace"? How can Secretary Baker get so exercised and consider a new settlement of a few mobile homes on some barren Judean hills as the "greatest threat to peace", when he seems to be oblivious and totally unconcerned about the unrelenting hostility of the Arab countries, the de facto incorporation of Lebanon by Syria, the Scuds and chemical weapons still remaining in Iraq, and the relentless and ominous build-up of Syria's missile forces?

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ing records of the nineteenth century (with some lively quotations), covers the great days of the safari and the white hunter, and arrives at the habits, social structures, and anatomy of elephants. They are remarkable creatures, and the more Mr. DiSilvestro reports of them, the more complex and engaging they become.

BEING PRESENT: GROWING UP IN HITLER'S GERMANY by Willy Schumann.

Kent State, \$29.00. Professor Schumann, of Smith College, was six years old when Hitler came to power in Germany. He grew up in a smallish, very ship-minded town on the approach to the Kiel Canal. The place was far from the centers of power and corruption, and devoid of concentration camps. Young Willy became a devoted Nazi believer. Professor Schumann's intention in writing this understated and not self-defensive memoir is "to show young Americans how easy it is, given the right historical and political circumstances, to form, control, and manipulate a whole nation—especially its young people." He does that effectively—provided young people read his book rather than a dismal sequel to *Gone With the Wind*.

AMAZONIA photographs and text by Loren McIntyre. Sierra Club, \$40.00.

The author-photographer has studied the Amazon and its tributaries for many years, and writes of the area and its people, its rain forests, its history, and its economic problems with charm as well as knowledge. His beautifully illustrated text sparkles with unexpected facts about early explorers and current wildlife. A domesticated toucan can "learn to patrol a house and yard, order people around, and sass them with dry, sharp, 'we-trek, we-trek' grunts when they fail to shape up." The botanist Richard Spruce recorded "various untoward circumstances" when he was "besieged by dysentery, malaria, and the threat of massacre by Indians." A lovely book, but saddening in its report of the dangers threatening a beautiful and most valuable territory.

ONE OF THE DANGEROUS TRADES: Essays on the Work and Workings of Poetry by Peter Davison. University of Michigan, \$11.95. Many of the essays in this book first appeared in *The Atlantic*.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

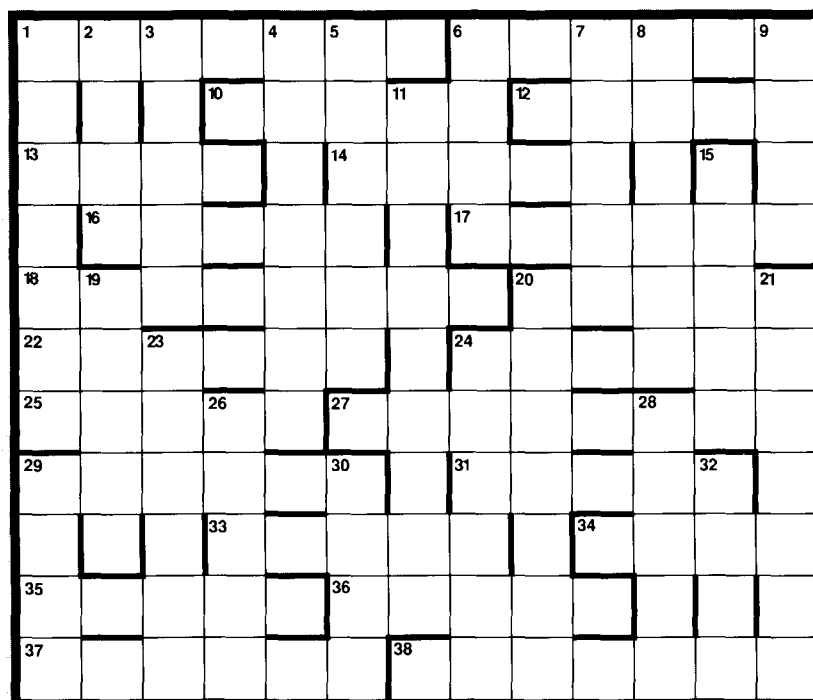
THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

INITIATION

Some of the clues' answers are too short for their places in the diagram, and need initiation in the form of a letter added to the front. In these cases new words are formed in the diagram. When the diagram is filled, the added letters (taken column by column from left to right) will spell an apt phrase. Answers to clues include eight proper nouns and an uncommon word at 1D.

The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 108.



ACROSS

1. Jimmy's successor dressed in elegant style, by habit
6. In comeback, the woman mostly takes roles as heartless ballerina types
10. Opera house retains one painter
12. Wood strand on the tongue
13. Spy hot chocolate sauce
14. South America embracing movie star
16. Rank low in speed
17. In Mexico, you and Theo set after our group
18. Country involved in prominent Nazi shipwreck?
20. Communicate piece of fundamental knowledge
22. Silver rod in instrument
24. Young lady eating piece of deep-dish pie finally getting slimmer?

25. Lousiest sausage, according to hearsay
27. Interpret cricket tune in a new way
29. A Spanish gentleman is a handsome fellow
31. Canopies get stretched tight, you might say
33. Tear off price
34. Loaded Eric Heiden's cargo
35. A yearning letter
36. Handles portions of grain
37. Expected to get a different desk
38. Biblical book deadening things?

DOWN

1. Tip was much better
2. Ring used in jump!
3. Car turns over repeatedly
4. Said, "Okay for takeoff"
5. First of sheep held in stationary enclosure
6. Skipping a step, start moving
7. Direction, for instance, in Spielberg movie
8. Write bit for small group
9. Do away with structure
11. Tag for a woman's unit coming in range of colors
15. Sell out lengths of cloth
19. Went on drive with narration
20. Scottish actor carries expensive weapon (*two words*)
21. Delineates that guy's behind and such
23. Skunks' tracks going around wheel
24. Cake of gold back of door
26. Santa Claus loses time, getting slightly cut
28. String broken by fourth of violinists playing piece
29. Measure a rearing horse
30. Small and smooth
32. After "Initiation," award mark

NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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WORD HISTORIES

Etymologies derived from the files of the Dictionary of American Regional English

BY CRAIG M. CARVER

dude

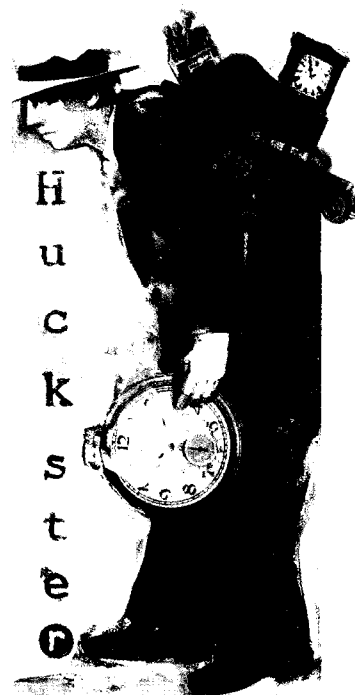
Like Bart Simpson and the adventurous cinematic duo Bill and Ted, whose frequent use of *dude* (fellow, guy) helped give the word its current popularity, *dude* is thoroughly American. It first appeared in print in the early 1880s, to describe a man fastidious in his dress and manner ("Every day



his face and hands were washed three times and his yellow hair was combed. Now this . . . was *dudish* in the hardy miner's eyes"—*Courier-Journal*, 1887). The most widely accepted theory is that *dude* appeared as an indirect result of the Aesthetic Movement in Great Britain. Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) was the high priest of this movement, whose adherents emulated his eccentric dress and affected speech and manner. In 1882, on a lecture tour in the United States, Wilde gave Americans a firsthand view of an aesthete; it seems likely that *dude* was coined from a combination of "dud" (an article of clothing) and "attitude," reflecting the self-conscious manner of Wilde and his imitators ("The social 'dude' who affects English dress and the English drawl"—*The American*, 1883). In the western United States the meaning was extended to refer disdainfully to an easterner or a city-bred person (hence the term *dude ranch* for a resort or ranch catering to vacationing *dudes*). *Dude* didn't lose these derogatory connotations until the 1960s, when it gained currency among urban blacks.

huckster

Among the defendants in the recent spate of lawsuits filed against cigarette manufacturers by smokers with cancer is Lorillard, the manufacturer of Kent cigarettes. During the early 1950s the brand contained a filter laced with asbestos (a known carcinogen), which was touted in advertisements of the time as being endorsed by the American Medical Association. The medical group was quick to respond to the advertisements, calling them "a most reprehensible instance of *hucksterism*." *Hucksterism* (advertising, often at its manipulative worst) has come a long way from the medieval *hukster* (peddler) bent beneath a heavy bundle of wares. The image of a bent figure inspired the word, from the prehistoric Indo-European root **keu-* (to bend) and its Germanic derivative **huk-*. This root gave English *hawker* (peddler) and *hawk* (to peddle) through the Middle Low German *hoken* (to bend, squat, bear on the back), along with *hunker*, through the Old Norse *hokra* (to crouch), and *huckster*, from Middle Dutch *hokester* (one who squats, a peddler).



From *huckster* as a retailer of petty goods ("Wee buy our molten tallowe . . . of the *hucksters* and tripe-wives"—Henry Best, *Farming and Account Books*, 1641) came the more common meaning, a person who acts out of petty or mercenary motives ("I am no *huckster*, to sell my daughter to the best bidder"—Mary E. Braddon, *Charlotte's Inheritance*, 1868).

hustings

The budget stalemate and the escalating tension in the Persian Gulf in the fall of 1990 gave political pundits pause as they tried to gauge voter discontent and anxiety "out on the *hustings*," as one editorial put it. *Hustings* (electioneering, political campaigning; places where these things are done) is from the Old English *husting*, which came from the Old Norse *husthing*, a compound of *hus* (house) and *thing* (assembly, council, court). Although this sense of *thing* died out in English, it survives in the Scandinavian languages Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish as *ting*. In Iceland the

parliament is still called the *Althing*. Because the original Germanic word is cognate with the Gothic *theihs* (a time scheduled for something), etymologists reason that it meant "the time or day of assembly" and is ultimately from the Indo-European root **tenk-* (to stretch), whose meaning was extended to cover "a stretch of time." In *husthing*, or "house assembly," the house being referred to was a king's or nobleman's, and the assembly was attended only by members of his immediate court. The second syllable was weakly accented, encouraging the pronunciation of *th* as *t*, and eventually establishing *husting*. From the meaning "court council," *husting*

became the name for the supreme court of London, made up of the Lord Mayor, the recorder, and aldermen. Used primarily in the plural form, it came to refer more specifically to the upper end of the hall, where the court convened, and then just to the platform

on which the mayor and aldermen sat. By the eighteenth century it referred to another platform, the one from which candidates for Parliament spoke and from which they were nominated. Finally it was extended to the stumping and electioneering process itself.





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